HURSTWOOD:

A

TALE OF THE YEAR 1715.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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DEDICATION.

To ARCHER CLUNN, Esq.

OF GRIFFYNHAVEL.

MY VERY KIND AND WORTHY FRIEND,

You will doubtless be surprized to receive these volumes, more particularly, perhaps, when you find that I have ventured, without permission, to inscribe them to you. You will remember, however, a certain intimation which I gave you of my intention one Christmas evening, as we sat round the Yule clog in your hospitable hall, and talked over the days gone by.

If you gratify me with the perusal of these pages, you will find sundry events recorded which are not unknown to you — nay — even some of which have been conveyed to me by your own lips in a strain of feeling and eloquence which, though I would imitate, I am conscious I cannot equal.

In family tradition there is frequently to be gathered much that is interesting; and of this I am never so thoroughly convinced, as when I walk with you along the oaken gallery which contains the portraits of your ancestors. But, even descending lower than the polished narrations of a well-educated gentleman, I have been often more than amused — I have been affected with the cottage tale, when humouring my darling propensity, the love of romance, I have made myself one of the curious and awe-struck circle, and listened with reverence and atten-

tion to the legend of the neighbouring mansion, as solemnly related by some venerable rustic. But to the point.

If you would enquire my reason for bringing forward in print certain of those particulars which you take so much pride in relating, and in listening to which I have, year after year, received so much pleasure, I can only reply, that I ventured to judge from my own sensations, of the reception a story founded on their basis would receive from the world.

Accordingly, during my visit at Griffynhavel last winter, being, as you know, rendered for some weeks incapable of joining you in our usual field sports, I employed some portion of my time in laying the foundation of the following pages. The employment was innocent, and formed an agreeable change from

severer studies; and if I need an example by way of apology, I have only to mention the name of that truly learned and excellent prelate, Dr. Saunderson, who, as he himself informs us, was accustomed to refresh his mind, after more abstruse occupations, with the pursuit of genealogies and heraldry; a mode of employment which, you will allow, borders very nearly upon that which I have undertaken.

In the composition of the following pages you are to expect no overpowering brilliancy of conception, no poetic raptures, no appalling imagery. Horace tells us of poets, "aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare." — If, as a romance writer, I accomplish the latter point, my end is gained; and if, my worthy friend, when we meet again in the echoing halls of Griffynhavel, should condescend to as-

sure me that the history of one of his own ancestors is not disgraced on paper by the workings of so unworthy a pen as mine, I am happy.

Hallcar, County of Radnor,
June 1823.

HURSTWOOD:

A TALE OF THE YEAR 1715.

CHAPTER I.

It was early one morning in the January of 1716, that a young man, meanly but somewhat peculiarly attired, passed through the main street of the little market-town of St. Marions. Though apparently much fatigued, he merely cast a side-long glance at the well known sign of the Robin Hood, and to the great surprize of mine host, who was standing at the door, passed on.

About a mile from the town a path to the right leads by a direct course

across a beautiful succession of most fertile pastures, to the neighbouring hamlet of Kilbank, well known in that part of the country as the residence of the ancient and respectable family of Kirkbye. Scarcely had our traveller left the road, ere he descended into a romantic hollow, rocky and sheltered here and there by the out-spreading arms of the gnarled and venerable oak.

As he proceeded further, the sward became smooth as velvet, decayed trunks and scattered patches of copsewood gave to the gully or glen all the picturesque effect of a true sylvan scene ; while to the left a narrow ledge of grey rock, gradually encreasing in height as the valley declined, at length, by its unbroken masses, seemed to block up all further egress on that side.

Often did the stranger pause to dwell for a moment on the quick succession of prospect, rude, soft, tranquil and sublime, as at each turn of the path it burst upon

his view. The morning was such as frequently succeeds a night of severe frost. Not a cloud floated on the blue concave, but the atmosphere was dull with the rising vapours. The sun was already advancing in his course, and ten thousand dew-drops, like diamonds on a mantle of green, either sparkled on the verdant turf or hung pendant from the twigs and shrubs.

At length the vale took a sudden turn to the right. The path led forward over an ivied bridge to the summit of an opposing eminence, and presented to the gaze of the traveller a scene still more beautiful than any he had yet witnessed. The ledge of rocks, following the windings of the valley, formed immediately in front of the place on which he now stood an extensive curve, around the base of which flowed the eddying waters of a deep and rapid river.

On this promontory, if it may be so called, protected and ornamented by forest trees of immense growth, stood an

ancient mansion, which, though evidently inhabited, still bore considerable marks of neglect and consequent decay.

The situation had been admirably selected. Rising downs of great extent, whose sides were partially scattered with wood, formed a noble back ground to the house, while the valley and river below, almost encircling it, seemed to mark out a boundary which no intruder might transgress.

While the stranger was pausing upon this scene, with eyes beaming with interest, and a countenance not unmarked with pensive feeling, his attention was suddenly withdrawn by the sound of approaching footsteps. He looked round, and perceived a young man of gallant exterior, carefully leading his horse down the path, with intent apparently to ford the river, the bridge being too narrow and elevated for any but foot passengers.

Actuated by that impulse which the pleasing contemplation of nature not

unfrequently produces, namely, that of disposing it to sympathize with every passing object, our traveller stepped forward, and checking for a moment the progress of the equestrian, enquired in an animated tone the name of the house upon which they now looked, its possessor, and such other information as a stranger would be naturally disposed to make himself acquainted with.

Whether there was a freedom in the colloquial address of the traveller to which the other had not been accustomed, or whether it was ill sorted with his appearance, for in truth his exterior was not much indebted to fashion, we do not pretend to decide. Suffice it that the equestrian stared, eyed his new acquaintance from head to foot, and saying something about what business such an one could have in making any enquiries on the subject, and wondering at his impudence in blocking up the path, he pushed rudely past, and pursued his course.

For a moment the hectic flushed the pale cheek of the traveller. The staff in his hand was half raised. It was but for a moment. He retained his position still gazing upon the view.

The equestrian meanwhile carefully descended, and arrived at the water's brink about a stone's cast above the bridge. He here mounted his steed, and pressed him to take the water. He was a tall and powerful animal, but young and unmanageable. Many times did he run back and rear frightfully as the spurs gored his sides. His rider sat to admiration, and displayed a most determined spirit to overcome his reluctance. After a long contest the generous animal at length rushed forward, but becoming still more terrified by the rapid flow of the gurgling stream, he quitted the straight forward direction, and suddenly wheeling half round, committed himself to the dangerous and rocky deeps.

But a few moments and the struggle

seemed passed. In different places were the horse and his rider seen contending with the waves, though to all appearance without the remotest chance of escaping destruction. At the point where the bridge was thrown over the river, it having but one arch supported on two projecting rocks, the stream being contracted in its course, rushed along, deep, unfathomable to the eye, and violent and irresistible in its current. Through this chasm the horse and his rider were hurried with dreadful rapidity. The poor animal, dashed with great force against the rocks, soon floated down the stream lifeless and unresisting, occasionally disappearing beneath the surface, but leaving a bloody track upon the waters as they closed and dimpled on his course.

Not much more fortunate was the equestrian. He supported himself with much dexterity till he reached the chasm. There, unable any longer to resist, he was dashed against a rock and borne along

by the violence of the current senseless and exhausted.

As he emerged and was thrown upon the more expanding surface of the river, he must have undoubtedly sunk to rise no more, had not a young man darted resolutely into the waves, and after a long and arduous struggle with the unrelenting element landed the now lifeless body upon the opposite bank. Two peasants, who had witnessed the whole affair from a distance, now hurried to the spot and offered to afford every assistance in their power.

The traveller, for it was he of whom we have before spoken, thankfully accepted their services, and regretting that it was out of his power to delay his journey any longer, recommended them to carry the body to the nearest house and apply the usual warm restoratives, till medical assistance could be procured from the town. The peasants immediately set about their task, and informing the stranger that Lady Anna, who lived

at the mansion, would be most likely to receive the unfortunate gentleman, they proceeded thither, after giving the stranger ample directions concerning the way to Kilbank, which was now but three or four miles distant.

As he re-ascended the hill, cold, wet, and shivering as he was, yet the traveller again paused and regarded the scene with a gaze of peculiar interest. He then passed the summit, and descending into a less wild and very fertile district, he vigorously pursued his journey and reached Kilbank before noon.

Mr. Kirkbye's mansion was neither very large, nor very ancient, but pleasantly situated upon a branch of the same stream which we have already mentioned. It was surrounded by large and open pastures, and gave to the passenger a very adequate idea of the wealth and importance of its possessor.

Our traveller rung at the gate. The sound of the huge bell was accompanied

with the barking and snarling of a host of curs and sporting dogs, who having the free range of the premises, were active in showing their dislike of the tattered appearance of their new guest. At length the porter appeared, and in answer to the enquiries proposed to him, led the way to the servants' hall, where, having deposited the stranger, he went to acquaint his master.

At this juncture a brace of pointers rushed into the hall, followed by a tall young man dressed in a green shooting dress, and holding his gun in hand. Barely casting his eyes upon the stranger, supposing him one of the numerous applicants that frequented the house, he was calling his dogs away, and going out by another door, when a voice arrested him, and he turned round and stood for some moments in silent astonishment.

"Harry!" "Robert!" with the usual exclamations of surprize and greeting, accompanied the recognition of the

two friends. He in the shooting dress, however, whom we shall know better hereafter by the name of Robert Kirkbye, heir to the lands of Kilbank, after the first ebullitions of feeling had subsided, looking somewhat mournfully at his friend, silently took his arm, and walking towards a sequestered part of the precincts, where a row of limes sheltered a walk by the side of the brawling brook, took that opportunity of conversing without the danger of interruption.

We will not follow them through the various and no doubt to them interesting recapitulation of days gone by. After a considerable interval they began their return to the house, near which a servant met them, to announce it as his master's pleasure that the stranger would attend him in his parlour.

"Now De Ruse," said Robert Kirkbye to his friend, use your eloquence with the old gentleman. If you thwart him, or pretend to take seriously any of his strong

expressions, it is all over. He allows no difference between young men and children, and unfortunately too is invincible in his political dislikes and partialities."

"Then where is the use of seeing him? I had better proceed on my journey and try what fortune will do for me elsewhere."

"I can tell what it will do for you, Harry. It will hang you, and there will be an end of one of the best fellows that ever buckled a sword to his side. Come, for my sake try your best. My father is honourable. Forbidding as you may find his exterior, it harbours a heart full of kindness and generosity. Just try him, and if you succeed it will be one of the happiest days of my life."

De Ruse followed the servant, but without any pleasing forebodings of the issue of the conference. When ushered into the study, he found Mr. Kirkbye busily employed in the perusal of a packet of letters. Without noticing the entrance

of the stranger further than by desiring him to be seated, he pursued his avocation so long and so steadily that De Ruse began to fancy that his presence was entirely overlooked.

The interval however gave him time to examine the room in which he was sitting, and speculate some little upon the physiognomy of his friend's father.

Mr. Kirkbye was verging upon sixty. In stature he was small, but compactly built. Like most of the country gentlemen of that period, he had been a free liver in his youth, but found it necessary, as age and infirmities came on, to be more moderate and careful. This was a great grievance, and added no little to the asperity of his manners.

His countenance had been handsome, and was still something superior to the common run. Though small, his features were prominent and expressive. His eye was large, round and rolling, and his hair thin and perfectly grey, was combed

back upon his head, where it terminated in a neat and small tye. He had a slight compression of the lips and wrinkle of the brow, which, joined to a manner somewhat pompous, and a mode of speech approaching the dictatorial, made him the oracle of the surrounding country and the terror of evil-doers. Living upon his own estate, he was a perfect model of correct management; — he could deal too in law phrases, and quote authorities; — was frequently chairman of the neighbouring sessions, and being a man of few words, took great care to imply "when I ope my lips, let no dog bark."

In political principles he was a decided whig; as a landlord he was liberal, and of course popular; as a father, ever in the extremes of indulgence and severity.

De Ruse, after a slight investigation, fancied he could read this character. He next glanced his eye round the room. It was manifestly the place of business, and contained on its well-ar-

ranged shelves all those grave and laborious volumes which, though almost universally unopened by the country magistrate and the landed proprietor, are nevertheless deemed indispensible requisites for the execution of their self-imposed and important duties. A fox's brush formed the handle of the bell rope; two swords crossed over the fire place, the emblems of militia service, surmounted an antique fowling-piece; and half a dozen ill-executed portraits of horses and dogs, with a few engravings of whilehome worthies, among whom figured the Lord Chancellor Burleigh, filled up those vacant places on the wall, which were unoccupied by the well-stocked and well-burnished book-cases.

At length depositing the packet upon the table, drawing his oaken arm-chair towards the fire, crossing his legs, and supporting his feet upon a small buffet, Mr. Kirkbye abruptly questioned the

stranger, though from their relative situation it was impossible to catch a glimpse of his person.

"And so, young man, I am informed you want to see me?"

"I *did*, sir, but unexpectedly finding your son here have made known my wishes to him."

"Very well, sir. And pray may I ask, what business you can possibly have with my son which does not equally concern me?"

"I have the honour to be your son's intimate friend, and therefore very naturally conceive him to be materially concerned in my welfare."

"Materially concerned!—very well, sir. Will you have the goodness to step forward, and let me know to what he is indebted for the honour of this visit?"

De Ruse came forward. Mr. Kirkbye drew his spectacles from the table, rubbed them with the corner of his pocket-hand-

kerchief, and having put them on, gazed steadily at the stranger. After a pause he resumed—

"In times like the present it behoves every householder to scrutinize well those whom he admits into his house. Now your appearance, young man,—pardon me,— I say your appearance, does not tally very well with your story. My son's friends are or ought to be in a rather better plight when they make calls of ceremony. I therefore conceive that your presence here portends something more."

"You are right in your conjecture, sir. I came here for the sole purpose of throwing myself upon my friend's generosity."

"Plainly enough spoken! And pray young gentleman who are you?"

"I am a Dane. My name is Harry De Ruse. Friends I have few who are not as unfortunate as myself, and as to relations, I have never known but one—

my father. He is high in the Danish service. I have not seen him for three years."

De Ruse sighed as he spoke, and his eyes sought the ground.

"I may be impertinent, Mr. De Ruse," resumed the old gentleman, "in requesting you to inform me how you have employed yourself during that long interval? But I have formed a shrewd guess, which the extraordinary situation in which you present yourself does I conceive warrant."

"I am a soldier, sir. It was my good fortune to fight under General Gordon in Muscovy, and when he left foreign service to join the standard of the Stuarts, I accepted his invitation and followed his fortunes."

"If I did not think as much! And so, young man, having had the good luck to escape a halter thus far, you have really dared at length to look a justice of the peace in the face!"

Mr. Kirkbye rose from his chair hastily and rung the bell. His eyes involuntarily rested on the figure of De Ruse. He could not perceive one muscle of his countenance distorted with apprehension. His eyes were still fixed upon the ground.

"Suppose," said the old gentleman, stepping up to him, "that in a few moments you should find yourself in the custody of his majesty's officers, what would you think then, young man?"

"I should think with pleasure," replied De Ruse, advancing a step, and thrusting his hand into his bosom, "that I had been fortunate enough to rid the world of one who could basely betray the unfortunate being who honoured him by seeking his protection!"

Mr. Kirkbye turned pale, when he perceived that the young foreigner was armed, and that instead of the perturbation he had anticipated, a strong feeling of indignation flashed from his eyes.

"Come, come," said he mildly, "let

us have no pranks with fire-arms, if you please, Mr. De Ruse. I am not one to care for threats, nor yet to press hard upon the miserable. You have no danger to fear with me. Let me tell you, however, young man, that in not immediately committing you, I am swerving from my duty, and more particularly since it is my unreserved opinion, that all who leave their own country to intermeddle with the affairs of others, richly deserve that fate which they too often escape."

At this moment a servant entered, and Mr. Kirkbye ordered him to go in search of his son, and send him in immediately. Robert was waiting without in great anxiety, and eagerly obeyed the summons. As he entered he could easily perceive that things had gone wrong; therefore taking a seat in silence, he awaited the issue of the conference.

"And so, Robert," said his father, regarding him with a stern and impatient

look, "not contented with giving me all the expence and trouble of getting your own offences remitted, you have presumed to draw after you all the runaway Jacobites in the country, to be the very ruin and downfall of your father's house. Now, sir, let me tell you once for all, that I have not raised, armed and clothed a company in Dormer's regiment—run all up and down the country to support the Protestant succession,—been crushed and hooted at county meetings, and put in constant fear of my life from a parcel of papists and tories,—I have not done and suffered all this, to get my estate confiscated, and myself hanged for harbouring a set of traitors and rebels under my very roof. Upon my soul, Robert, I cannot tell which surprizes me most, your own imprudence or the unparalleled impudence of this—what shall I call him—this Dane."

Young Kirkbye stole a glance at his friend. Their eyes met. He shook his head mournfully, and put on a look of

entreaty. The appeal was not lost. De Ruse, taking his hat from the ground, advanced to the door.

"I wish you good morning, Mr. Kirkbye," said he, in a firm and manly voice; "and should fortune ever place it in my power to be serviceable to you or any of your family, I will endeavour to be so, without remembering the unmerited insults that you have thought fit to heap upon the head of an unfortunate being. There are other laws besides those contained within your printed volumes. The native feelings of a British heart, and the pure charity of a Christian spirit, I did expect would have some influence with a gentleman whose character stands so fair with the world. I find I am disappointed. The unfortunate must indeed trust to Providence alone!"

He shut the door. His footsteps died away along the passage, and a long silence between the father and son attended his departure.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASVATI MAHAL.

CHAP. II.

NOTHING could exceed the mortification of the young foreigner as he paced along the neatly gravelled road that led from the mansion of Kilbank towards the wilder district from which he had so recently emerged. But most of all did he feel annoyance on his friend's account, knowing well the poignant feelings of shame and distress with which his generous spirit would be overwhelmed, from the narrow-minded nature of the recent occurrences.

Robert Kirkbye was indeed like the ancient chieftain of Greece, worthy of the epithet of melior patre. With all his father's sterling qualities, he inherited from his mother an exterior so good-humoured and conciliating, that it threw a charm around all his actions, and pro-

claimed him as much the man of feeling as of principle. It was in the Highlands of Scotland that the young men had first become acquainted. Young Kirkbye was visiting a relation whose estate lay in the neighbourhood of Braemar, at the very time when the chiefs of the clans were plotting against the government, and collecting their resources from every side.

De Ruse accompanied his patron General Gordon, who, in conjunction with the Marquesses of Huntley and Tullibardine, the Earls Marischal, Southesk, and Mar, and many other distinguished characters, took the lead in the meditated revolt.

With Sir Ingelram Bell of Cockayne, Mr. Kirkbye's relation, De Ruse was a great favourite. He had been introduced by his patron to the house, and made a welcome guest there till the actual breaking out of hostilities obliged him to join the rebel army. The young men, thus thrown together, became inseparable companions; and as was not unnatural, the

cause in which the one had embarked his fortunes, soon became an object of peculiar interest to the other.

Sir Ingelram, though from prudential motives he took no open part with the insurgents, yet was a Jacobite in his heart, and had a peculiar delight in thwarting, by every means in his power, both the opinions and plans of his kinsman of Kilbank. Though the gentlemen always retained towards each other the exterior of politeness whenever they met, which indeed was very seldom, yet they indulged a hearty and mutual dislike, and had no community of feelings or interest. The Scotsman had indeed a good estate and no family, and therefore he was allowed to indulge his whim of frequently having young Kirkbye with him; "for," as the father always argued, "though Robert will never of course live at Cockayne, yet it will make a splendid provision for his second son."

Under these circumstances, it is not to

be wondered at if Sir Ingelram, instead of opposing his young kinsman's plan of accompanying his friend in the expedition about to march southward, rather encouraged him in it; at the same time giving him a hint, that he need not fear the consequences of disobedience to his father's wishes on the score of anticipated penury and disinheritance.

De Ruse and Robert Kirkbye fought side by side at the memorable battle of Dumblaine, and endured together a series of such hardships posterior to that event, as might naturally be expected in a warfare at once so wild and desultory.

When, however, the army begun to break up, and General Gordon found it necessary to make a hasty retreat to the northern counties, Robert Kirkbye, at the earnest request of his friend, retired to Cockayne, where he was received with the greatest kindness and affection by Sir Ingelram. Mr. Kirkbye, however, who had been privately informed of his son's

imprudence, hurried to the north; and procuring, by the extensive interest he possessed with the government, a free pardon for his son, retained him a close prisoner to the domain of Kilbank, under peril of his paternal malediction.

After the dismissal of the rebel army among the wilds of Badenoch, each man was obliged to look to himself, and De Ruse, having separated from his patron, lay for some time concealed in a miserable shed on the rocky shores of the Western Highlands; from whence, taking advantage of the arrival of a smuggling vessel, he attempted to gain the Isle of Man; but being frustrated by contrary winds, was landed in an obscure creek on the coast of Cardigan, from whence, in the most miserable plight, he had made his way to St. Marions, relying on the generosity and kindness of his friend.

We have seen how far he was disappointed in his expectations. His warm feelings of attachment, however, towards

his friend suffered no diminution; and he now most heartily gave that pity to another, which but a few moments before he had been earnestly claiming for himself. "What," thought he, as he emerged from the last gate of the domain, "what is there in my situation, pitiable and forlorn as it is, compared to his, who is doomed to suffer a friend and companion in arms to be driven from that roof, beneath which he expected and justly demanded a welcome and a shelter?"

The natural energy of De Ruse's mind was now roused into action. During his hazardous progress, he had every where heard the senseless and unmeaning clamour raised by the lowest of the population against the unfortunate insurgents; and he had no little reason to dread, that the singularity of his appearance, and the uncertain and suspicious object of his wanderings, would in a very short time betray him into that awkward situation, which, for many reasons, independent of

the natural love of life, he peculiarly wished to avoid.

In difficult circumstances strong minds are speedy and constant in their determinations. When De Ruse found himself again on the public path, he paused and looked around him. On one hand extended a beautiful, well-peopled, and fertile country; towards the west rose green and ridgy downs backed by trackless moors and wastes, whose dark outlines were unbroken, save by vast masses of solitary rock. Fate urged him on. He rushed forward, and sought protection and safety in those scenes most congenial with his fortunes. The gloomy deserts before him seemed to attract his footsteps; and the specimen he had just had of the remorseless and unfeeling nature of man, offered an additional inducement for him to avoid their haunts.

Leaving the path, he forded the river considerably above Hurstwood, the mansion he had so much admired in the

morning; and crossing a part of its ample domain, soon found himself in a trackless solitude, where rocks and heaths and tumbling torrents formed to his indignant soul a glad exchange for the soft scenes of luxury and wealth, and the busy hum of man.

Meanwhile Robert Kirkbye remained for some time with his father, listening impatiently and indignantly to a pompous vindication of his own conduct in this affair; a proof, in the young man's mind, that all did not sit easy in that quarter.

To the father's repeated assertions, that uncommon severity was necessary in such cases, — that it was highly dangerous to have any communication with such characters as the foreigner whom he had just dismissed, — that the government was jealous of his attachment already, — and that to afford an asylum to such vagabonds, was contrary both to his moral and political duties, — to all this, the son answered not a word; but his counte-

nance very plainly evinced the vexation which took possession of his whole soul.

Mr. Kirkbye was both fond and proud of his son. He could not, therefore, with all his arguments, quite argue himself into a conviction that his own conduct had been altogether proper towards that son's friend. As soon, therefore, as he thought he had said enough to convince Robert of what he could not convince himself, he went to his bureau, and putting a note of considerable value into his hands, bade him hasten after De Ruse, and afford him thereby that pecuniary assistance which was most necessary both for his safety and his existence.

"But hear me, Robert," said he, "it is not that I like the young man, or wish to favour his principles; I detest them altogether; but ——"

Robert did not wait to hear the conclusion of the sentence, nor yet to remind his father of the great Christian mandate, which bids us "to love our enemies;"

but seizing the proffered sum, hurried from the house, crossed the grounds, and attained the summit of an eminence over which you pass to St. Marions.

He looked eagerly around, but without espying a single human being. No sound was heard but the bark of dogs and the lowing of cattle. He descended, and with a rapid pace pursued the opposite direction, but with no better success; and after having scoured the country round till the sun set in mist, he was obliged to return home, with the melancholy consciousness that his friend, a wretched outcast, pennyless and almost naked, had gone forth into the midst of his enemies, without even the kind voice of sympathy to console him.

CHAP. III.

While the events we have just related were passing at Kilbank, the gentleman whom De Ruse had rescued from his perilous situation was conveyed by the peasants to Hurstwood. No sooner was his still lifeless body exposed to the view of the few domestics who inhabited the mansion, than with screams and every token of alarm they ran to inform their mistress, Lady Anna Kemyss, of the shocking accident which had befallen young Mr. Pennington of St. Marions.

Immediately the whole house was in a commotion. John Drew the old gardener, or in reality the servant of all work, was dispatched on Miss Rachel's poney to fetch the surgeon from the town, while under Lady Anna's direction every restorative that could be thought of was

administered, and every means pursued by warm applications to recall departed animation to the unfortunate sufferer.

It was not till evening that Julius Pennington became conscious of the attentions of those who surrounded him. His recovery, however, was attended with so much acute pain, that it was not deemed advisable to remove him at present; and accordingly his parents, who had arrived in the greatest distress, accepted their hostess's invitation to stay the night and part of the following day; more they protested they could not.

The next morning the patient was able to walk, and merely experienced that languor and stiffness which naturally resulted from the loss of blood and the bruises he had sustained. Mr. and Mrs. Pennington accordingly returned to St. Marions, leaving their son to follow at his leisure.

But before we proceed further with our story, it will be necessary to premise

a few particulars relative to the family at Hurstwood.

The mansion with its large and beautiful domain had lapsed, the country insinuated somewhat oddly, to Mr. Pennington, a gentleman of some consideration, and whose eldest son we have just introduced to our readers. It had been the property of an ancient race, who bore the same name with their residence. But many years had elapsed since they had deserted it; and perhaps it would have entirely fallen to decay, had not Mr. Pennington prudently allowed it to be tenanted, though without receiving any pecuniary returns for the accommodation.

It was now about twelve years since Lady Anna Kemyss had retreated from the giddy scenes of dissipation and high life, to pass the remainder of her days within the venerable walls of Hurstwood. Her father, the Earl of Norland, was one of those men who scruple not to spend to the very extent of their means, leaving

the younger members of their family proud and poor, a perpetual torment to themselves, and an unceasing burden to their relations. So long as he lived, his children enjoyed uncontrolled splendour in the family residences, but when he was suddenly taken from them, the younger branches were dismissed, the son to seek his fortune in other lands, and the daughters to economize that scanty pittance which the bounty of their eldest brother chose to allow them. Lady Anna and her only sister, thus circumstanced, were glad to accept Mr. Pennington's proposal, and occupy the vacant mansion of Hurstwood as long as he should think it convenient.

Scarcely had two years elapsed, ere the death of her sister and the melancholy account of the murder of her younger brother Orlando, when engaged on a mission in Spain, materially changed the disposition of her establishment. Colonel Kemyss left one orphan daughter. Lady Anna,

suffering under accumulated griefs, and thinking that in her solitary situation it might be a pleasing employment, sent for the as yet unconscious Rachel, and collecting together the wreck of her poor brother's fortunes, determined to devote it to the maintenance and education of her niece.

With this trifling pittance, and the small sum she was allowed by her brother, Lord Norland, to draw quarterly from his steward, she contrived to keep up bare appearances; no easy matter with one who never knew till she had reached the meridian of life the stern necessity of setting a value upon money. Nor indeed did Lady Anna appropriate her little income as well as she might have done. She brought with her into her solitude all those prejudices which were almost necessarily consequent upon the nature of her education. Though fully conscious of the narrowness of her means, yet she was very unwilling that others should

suspect it; and not reflecting that her own respectability was such in the eyes of the world, as to be in a great measure independent of style, she foolishly enough sacrificed many real comforts for a species of parade so ridiculous and incomplete in itself, that far from screening, it only made her poverty more glaring and notorious.

Thus Lady Anna was by no means beloved in her own neighbourhood, for she found it necessary to practise a thousand meannesses with her inferiors, in order to keep on a footing with those whom she regarded as her equals.

Under these circumstances, therefore, it is not to be wondered at if the fair orphan, as her intellect enlarged and her views of things became more extended, found Hurstwood destitute of many of those comforts and conveniences of which she observed people in a much inferior line of life in quiet and contented possession. She could not conceive why the establishment should be limited to a

few domestics, whose low wages and scanty food allowed them the privilege of being impertinent and careless, merely that an old cast-off coach of the late Lord Norland's should be dragged every Sunday to the neighbouring church by a pair of horses, whose age and lean condition rendered it a matter of weekly consultation, whether or not they could perform their appointed task: nor could she dive into the expediency of an absolutely starving economy in the household affairs, in order that a set of rich neighbours might be regaled at stated times in each year, and that too very inadequately to the pretensions of the titled hostess.

Yet while the natural good sense of Rachel Kemyss saw all this, she was aware that her influence was not sufficient with her aunt to produce any change. She was contented therefore to be silent, and endeavour to reconcile herself to a state of things over which she had no controul.

Lady Anna moreover, with all her prejudices, was not the best tempered creature in the world. We are far from agreeing in opinion with those who condemn all single ladies as disappointed members of society, being ourselves of opinion that they form a very valuable part of it, and have perhaps, if they could only think so, been fortunate in steering clear of the shoals and quicksands of matrimony. Lady Anna, however, (but from what cause we will not precisely declare, being of opinion nevertheless that the narrowness of her means and disappointed pride had much to do with it,) displayed in her whole countenance and mein, what the fancy would naturally pourtray if it was set to picture, not an old maid generally, but a *dissatisfied* old maid.

If we were impartially to take a review of society, and select from thence those unmarried females whose minds had been polished by education, and whose views

were regulated by the great Christian principle, we should find, that the vulgar and frequent abuse of this class of persons is as unfounded in fact as it is unmanly in expression. Many have indeed to lament a poverty and dependence which from their sex and rank they cannot controul; others have to endure the pangs of early but ill-requited affection; while some have to suffer the deprivation of the society of their nearest relatives, who, forming other connections, allow their feelings to run into another channel; and it is, we conceive, one of these causes or all of them combined, that often mingle gall with the cup of their existence. But we can never coincide in opinion with those conceited writers and speakers, who would attribute to the whole class a peculiar asperity of aspect and manner, because they have not, like some of their more fortunate friends, procured for themselves a partner and a companion, who eight times out of ten

embitters their existence or tyrannizes over their affections.

Independently of a countenance at once sharp and forbidding, and a form spare and upright, Lady Anna had other peculiarities which seemed rather to gain ground than be softened by encreasing years.

She always retained a very vivid remembrance of the days that were past, and she looked upon the characters that figured and the fashions that prevailed when she formed a part of the gay world, as things that had never been equalled in former times, and could never be surpassed in the present. Thus she disdained to keep pace with modern improvements, and having her mind constantly fixed upon the gaieties of her youth, she made not the slightest alteration in dress, in speech, or in manner; but even forgetting to make the common allowances for encrease of years, she paced the venerable groves and halls of

Hurstwood, as she would some thirty years previous have paraded the public walks of Kensington, or the crowded purlieus of St. James's.

Her pride, however, was the most offensive and ridiculous of her unfortunate peculiarities. It amounted to an absolute weakness. Untitled worth was by her totally overlooked. Wealth acquired by honest industry was truly plebeian, and it was shocking to think that such things could ever be endured in civilized society. In her estimation the sublimest effort of knowledge was to show a perfect acquaintance with those authors who had written on the genealogies of the great families of the country; and the very test of gentility was never to be caught compromising superior dignity by familiar intercourse with an inferior, however great his personal merit and pretensions.

Such was Lady Anna Kemyss, but not such the hapless orphan whom she

honoured with her protection. Whether it is that the absurdities of those with whom we live have a tendency to put us upon our guard against indulging the same, or that there are some minds too original to be drawn aside by example and even by precept, we will not digress to enquire; but certainly in her qualities of mind, and person, as well as in her general bearing, there was as wide a difference between Rachel and her aunt as it is well possible to conceive, even supposing they had never been thrown in each other's way.

Philosophers assert that continual and unobstructed intercourse has a natural tendency to assimilate, not the minds only, but even the persons of such as live constantly amid the influence of domestic familiarity. Hence the remarkable similitudes which are sometimes observed between man and wife, and from which the world, without scrutinizing the cause, have been led to conclude that marriages

"are formed in heaven."—While it must be generally allowed that long and familiar intercourse does often produce in people the same trifling and unimportant peculiarities of *manner*, yet, where the intellect flourishes in full vigour, it can have no influence over the innate qualities of the *soul;* judgment teaches the eye and the ear to discover what is absurd and incorrect, and once detected, common sense allows no room for imitation.

Rachel too clearly saw, and indeed suffered too much by the errors and absurdities of her protectress, to be ever in danger of falling into the same. The natural delicacy of her mind was so often offended by the worldly demeanour and narrow prejudices of Lady Anna, that the danger rather lay in her adopting the other extreme; and to prevent this the whole force of her better judgment was frequently called in aid.

Mild, gentle, and affectionate in her

nature, she was early accustomed to bend to the storm; the harshest expressions she learned ever to repel with meakness; and to the most unreasonable commands she yielded with patient submission. She made it a principle of Christian duty to be unvaried in those filial attentions which she conceived were due to her who had voluntarily undertaken the place of a parent; and whenever the waywardness of her aunt pressed hard upon her patience, she was accustomed to comfort herself with the reflection, that by forbearance, she was at once fulfilling the injunctions and following the example of Him to whom she morning and evening bent the knee of adoration and thanksgiving.

In one particular only had the invincible prejudices of Lady Anna obtained any influence over her feelings. Accustomed as she was from the early period of childhood, to hear the most violent expressions of contempt and indignation

against those who by marriage, by excess, or by imputed folly of any kind, injured the dignity, narrowed the influence, or depressed the fortunes of the noble race from which they were sprung, it is not to be marvelled at, if her young and ductile mind, by being so constantly impressed with the theme, yielded in a measure to the violence of the prejudice, and habitually shuddered at the bare idea of the great criminality of such a course of conduct.

Though in her own person utterly regardless of the arrogating claims of family distinction, yet when every thing derogatory thereto was so frequently placed before her as a crime, not so much towards herself as others, it caused in her an instinctive dread of actions, which her reason, when calmly consulted, would pronounce to be perfectly correct, or at least abstractedly blameless.

In her ideas on these subjects, Lady Anna went to a very ridiculous extreme.

It was her constant endeavour to instil into the mind of her protegée the shocking consequences of lowering herself in the world. The various branches of great families, she argued, must ever keep their eyes firmly fixed on the head of the house. Whatever they did must have a reference to him and his dignity. They had no *right* to consult their own feelings,—their own comfort,—or even their own interests, if there was any risk of thereby sullying the pure stream of their ancestry; in fact, they had a place in society, high and respectable, to support, and they ought to consider themselves slaves to it, under every advantageous or disadvantageous circumstances of life.

Often as she descanted on these subjects, with a glow of language and a positiveness of expression which astonished her juvenile auditor, Lady Anna would proceed from general observations to particular cases, and conclude with a caution

deep, solemn, and energetic, that the heiress of the wide domain and ancient honours of the noble house of Kemyss, would never suffer these things to escape from her recollection, but preserve them as a lamp to her feet during her progress through life.

Rachel was indeed the next in succession to her uncle, Lord Norland. He had no family; but so much was he attached to the memory of a lady he had once loved, that after her death he chose a life of strict seclusion from the gaieties of the world, though his talents and his fortune were both actively engaged in forwarding the public and private interests of his countrymen.

Lord Norland was one of that class of beings who conceal, beneath an exterior rigid and stern, a heart neither devoid of sensibility, nor hardened to the impulses of those human passions which he would affect to despise. He was eccentric; but

it was that species of eccentricity which never overstept the bounds of gentlemanly conduct, and which scorned to exercise its selfish absurdities upon the feelings and harmless prejudices of others. His soul, solitary and elevated, spurned the meed of public approbation. Whatever he did, he did silently; while he chose to leave many things undone, which entailed upon him the anticipated but unregretted censure of the world.

Amongst the latter was reckoned the scanty provision he afforded from his ample funds to Lady Anna, and the extraordinary want of interest which he appeared to display towards his brother's child, the probable heir of his possessions.

Since the settlement of his relatives at Hurstwood, he had paid one visit. It was but for a few days; and though he must have observed the incomplete style in which every thing was conducted, yet

his departure was accompanied with no display of liberality, if we except an extensive but very plain collection of well-established authors, which Rachel found in her room when he was too far distant to receive her acknowledgements.

CHAP. IV.

On the day of Julius Pennington's eventful and almost miraculous escape from a watery grave, Rachel, as was her frequent custom, had prevailed upon John Drew to saddle Gipsey, a beautiful and spirited black poney, presented to her by her kind friend Mrs. Kirkbye of Kilbank.

Her aunt, being often querulous, impatient, and out of humour with all the world, was at those times so little desirable as a companion, that a breath of free air upon the neighbouring downs, or a wilder association with the rocks and heaths and streamy dells of the more remote mountains, afforded to the beautiful orphan a relief at once delightful and invigorating.

On the morning in question, she had rambled further than usual; and though unaccompanied, felt little apprehension,

as she was still traversing a part of the domain belonging to the mansion. Moreover, it was seldom that human footstep intruded upon those wilds, for they terminated abruptly with the broad expanse of the ocean, and conducted to a precipitous and romantic coast, almost solely tenanted by the feathered inhabitants of the rocks.

The solemn imagery of such scenes accorded well with the fancy and feelings of Rachel; and in proportion as she suffered, and was annoyed by the worldly conversations and the worldly sacrifices that embittered her home, so did she enjoy the unshackled freedom of these solitary excursions.

The sun, however, was now past his meridian; and she turned her poney's head towards a small bridge, covered with moss and lichens, and of the rudest masonry, which spanned, with its, dark and mouldering arch, a noisy mountain tor-

rent. A path, attending the sinuous course of this, led to Hurstwood. Unaccustomed, as she was, to meet with any human being amid these solitudes, her surprize may easily be imagined, when on passing the key-stone of the bridge, and carefully picking her way around an abrupt turn, scattered and almost blocked up with masses of rock that had rolled from above, a voice, at once melodious and respectful, arrested her attention.

On being thus suddenly accosted, and particularly when on looking side-way she perceived a young man meanly clad and bearing a cudgel in his hand, standing at her horse's head, Rachel felt the colour leave her cheeks, and every limb begin to tremble.

The stranger, however, seeing her alarm, apologized, in terms at once so gentle and so manly, for the intrusion, that her fears were immediately dissipated, and she answered his questions, concerning the coun-

try, with great coolness and perspicuity, and not unmixed with a tone of compassionate feeling.

"Nothing, lady," said he, as he stepped forward to proceed on his journey, "would have induced me to take the liberty of obtruding myself upon your notice, but misfortune, which I always conceive gives a kind of claim upon the commiseration of the fair sex. Persecuted by my enemies, and even driven from the shelter of a friendly roof, I must again express my thanks for your condescension, and hope, that opportunity will at some time allow me to prove how grateful I feel for that look of kindness, and those words of balm."

Respectfully uncovering his head, and wishing her a good morning, the stranger, in whom we shall have no difficulty in discovering De Ruse, proceeded rapidly in the opposite direction, and was soon lost amid the windings of the path. Rachel, meanwhile, returned home, won-

dering at the singularity of the interview, and the unaccountable disparity between the situation and the address of her new acquaintance.

On her arrival there, all was commotion and anxiety, on account of the dreadful accident which had befallen Julius Pennington. This young man had been the frequent companion of her childhood, and indeed was almost a constant visitor at the house up to the time of his misfortune; therefore we must not be surprized if Rachel both felt and displayed considerable solicitude concerning his welfare, and was almost incessant in her enquiries, till the medical attendant pronounced him out of danger.

This display of feeling was noticed with peculiar gratification both by Lady Anna and Mr. Pennington. This worthy couple—the parent and the guardian, had already with true aristocratic resolution, chalked out a line of action for the young people beneath their pupilage,

which they were fully determined in their own minds that they should pursue.

"You know, Mr. Pennington," said the lady, as they sat at breakfast together the morning subsequent to the accident, "that young people are not as well able to judge upon points of consequence, even when the concern is all their own, as we are, who have purchased experience by age. I hold it therefore to be a perfectly correct doctrine, that when a young man and young woman refuse to undertake that which the more experienced conceive to be for their advantage, the latter have a right of enforcing compulsion, as far as lies in their power."

Mr. Pennington bowed in humble acquiescence with this sublime doctrine.

"But," continued Lady Anna, "I cannot suppose, after the long intimacy which has subsisted between Julius and my niece, and particularly, if we may be allowed to form a judgment from her late conduct, I really cannot suppose that

there will be the slightest obstacle, at least on her part, to the arrangement of which we have been speaking. In fact, Mr. Pennington, take my word for it, there *shall not.*"

"And take my word for it," replied the father, while his eyes glistened with undissembled exultation, "that should my son dare to thwart, nay even to express the slightest disapprobation of the measures proposed, I'll teach him a lesson of repentance that he will never forget. But I am of opinion with your ladyship, that no security will be called for in the present case."

The entrance of Rachel herself put an end to this enlightened conference, and shortly after Mr. Pennington and his lady left the mansion on their return to St. Marions. One of those equivocal conversations then took place between Lady Anna and her niece, which convinced the latter that some new project was in agitation which time only would

develope. Though Rachel in her intercourse with Julius Pennington was accustomed to receive and use an almost fraternal familiarity; though she was often entertained, and even delighted with his society; though she could not but confess that in person he was decidedly superior to the common class of men, and that in conversation and manner he was frequently almost fascinating, yet when she perceived the drift of her aunt's machinations, saw through the expectations of Mr. Pennington, and noticed in Julius himself a certain air of confidence and freedom hitherto unusual; with the every-day perverseness of human nature, she had the audacity to stand aloof and seriously determine to examine her *own* feelings and prepossessions, before she blindly acquiesced in the selfish views of persons of whose good sense and correctness of judgment she had more than a bare suspicion.

Julius was, what the world would un-

doubtedly call, an uncommon match. And he thought so himself. Rachel was timid and confiding, and perhaps under other circumstances might have easily fallen in with the notions of the world; but she had known Julius from boyhood, and being possessed of a due share of discrimination, did not fail to call it in to her aid.

Rachel had not one spark of selfishness in her nature. The follies of her aunt, however, frequently compelled her to exercise her own judgment. She had, in fact, no one near her to whom she could look up. Had Lady Anna in any matters of consequence proved herself a woman of discretion, her niece would undoubtedly have placed great reliance upon her opinion; but on the contrary her motives were ever so absurd, her views so arbitrary, and her conduct so inconsistent and weak, that Rachel found herself obliged, from a sense of common propriety, and even from prudential

views, to be continually on her guard in the minutest particulars.

Mr. Pennington, therefore miscalculated when he made Lady Anna his friend, under the expectation of her influence being absolute. Rachel penetrated the scheme, and accordingly despised the schemer.

Young Pennington was on his way to Hurstwood, full of the intention of declaring to Rachel, the honours he had decreed for her enjoyment in so exalted a matrimonial alliance, when the accident he met with, cooled for one day the confident expressions of his attachment.

His father, however, previous to his return, had communicated to him the interest which the fair orphan had displayed for his recovery, and he resolved, accordingly, that no time should be lost in making that his own which appeared so easily won.

Mankind set but little value upon that which woos their acceptance; when,

therefore, he received the following answer to his proposal of a union of interests and affections, Julius Pennington was astonished at himself, and began to fancy the object he aspired to was far more exalted than he had hitherto allowed himself to supect.

"Julius," replied Rachel, after patiently listening to his speech, delivered, by the bye, in a very easy, confident, and unembarrassed style, "though I own myself not to be altogether unprepared for the mention of this affair, yet allow me to say, I am really surprized at it. Our intimacy has not been such as to warrant even the bare idea of a more intimate connection than already exists."

Julius started, and instead of taking her hand, and pouring forth that string of complimentary and condescending expressions which he had prepared for the occasion, he rose from his seat, went to the window, and endeavoured to disguise his astonishment and mortification.

"Then you decidedly refuse my proposal,—you reject my suit—you discard my affection—my friendship?"

"By no means," replied Rachel, endeavouring to conceal her agitation by fixing her eyes upon some work in which she was employed. "I value your friendship, and you know I do not dislike your society. I merely say that I am not prepared at present to do more, and therefore would take it very kindly, Julius, if you will not pursue the subject further."

The ardour of the young man increased with the obstacles that opposed it. His pride had received a check, and he now felt doubly anxious to retrieve his consequence. In what she had said, Rachel did not convey a direct refusal. Her feelings towards young Pennington were as yet of a very equivocal kind, and she wished to gain time before she took any very decided part with regard to the meditated connection.

Never did she think Julius looked more

engaging, never did she observe more grace in his motions, more insinuation in his expressions, than when full of assumed humility and contrition he lamented his presumption, his precipitation, his folly, in too implicitly obeying the impulse of his hopes, the ardour of his attachment. Accordingly, she was finally prevailed upon by his prayers and intreaties, to promise, that in six months she would allow him to renew his addresses, and then acquaint him with her determination.

After the young man's departure, for he left Hurstwood immediately after this denouement, Rachel retained her seat, pensive, and full of thought. There are frequently occasions in life when interest and inclination are at variance. The present was one of those, and bitterly did our fair orphan regret that the alternatives of choice or rejection had ever fallen to her lot. Worldly prudence plainly spoke out that an alliance so suit-

able as to birth, fortune, and personal endowments, was not to be heedlessly relinquished by one, whose present situation was irksome and uncomfortable, and whose future prospects were at least dubious. But opposed to this, were some small whisperings of prudence, which caused her to reflect deeply before she acted.

In the first place, the character of Mr. Pennington had uniformly disgusted her by its selfishness and its weakness. Moreover, she had her reasons for suspecting, not the disposition merely, but even the principles of his son. Six months, she hoped, would enable her to ascertain the truth of her conjectures, and she determined accordingly to be at once vigilant and guarded. She allowed to Julius the power of being delightful, and gave him every credit for exterior amiability. But as she cast her eye back upon the years of intimacy that were past, her mind could not divest itself of the suspicion,

that that countenance which now seemed continually beaming with smiles of universal good-will, could likewise be overcast with the clouds of intemperate passion, and that soul, from which, to an unobservant eye, emanated nothing but what was noble and honourable, could stoop to what was mean, tyrannical, and base.

CHAP. V.

Leaving the plots and counterplots of Hurstwood, we will attend the outcast, De Ruse, in his progress. Having been informed by Rachel of a path which led to the sea shore, he vigorously pursued it, full of the idea of contriving some means to make good his escape from a country at once so hostile and inhospitable.

If, however, he had been struck with the venerable and decaying grandeur of the mansion of Hurstwood, much more was he delighted with the appearance and character of its youthful inmate, and often, though ineffectually, did he cast his eyes backwards to the bridge in the valley, if haply he might catch one other glance of the sweet Naïad of the scene.

In misfortune, how soothing are the

genuine accents of pity! Yet, alas! how generally do mankind deprive both themselves and others of the heaven-born delights of true sympathy. Amid the desolation and gloom of his prospects, the heart of the gallant Dane was at once consoled and cheered, elevated and strengthened, by the soft, the unaffected, the commiserating pathos of his new friend; and, once almost driven to despair by the forlorn and hopeless nature of his situation, he now felt more reconciled to the world, and more desirous to struggle for the future enjoyment of that good, which he had cause to believe still existed in it. "Angel of mercy!" exclaimed he, stopping for a moment, and casting his gaze back, while his heart expanded with a thousand new emotions, "may that gentle breast never heave one sigh, except it be to compassionate the misery of others!"

The path speedily emerging from the irregular glens and fissures of the moun-

tains, now traversed the open heath, and was soon lost amid the intricacies of the sheep-tracks. De Ruse pushed forward. The sea, with its broad, unruffled, and solitary expanse, now bounded the horizon. Below was a coast, bold, wild, and uncultivated. Hills with surfaces of bare rock, shelving cliffs, and vales of melancholy desolation, composed the scene; and, as he cautiously descended, he could not but congratulate himself upon his arrival in a spot, where he might, at least, be for a time free from the most ingenious and persecuting malice of his species. Before he descended from the elevated peak upon which he now stood, he anxiously cast his eyes around for some signs of a human being, for the calls of hunger began to be very pressing. Nothing, however, was visible, but the wild face of nature; no cottage smoke invaded the atmosphere in airy curlings, — no bark of dogs, — no distant echo of the human voice saluted his ear; the univer-

sal stillness was unbroken, save by the faint dashing of the flowing tide, whose indistinct murmurs were borne at intervals upon the rising breeze.

De Ruse descended, and soon found himself in a narrow ravine amongst the rocks, which, running for some distance parallel with the ocean, at length opened towards it, through the awful jaws of two impending cliffs. Thither he proceeded; but he soon discovered that his further progress was barred. He was elevated thirty or forty feet from the waves, whose rude and sullen dashings seemed almost to chide his presumption.

Wearied with incessant fatigue, half famished, and the prey of intense anxiety and distress, he looked down upon the angry heavings of the deep, with half a wish that himself and all his cares were laid beneath them. At this instant, a large and jetty raven, throwing itself from its giddy height into the still bosom of the air, sailed slowly and majestically

past, sending forth, at measured intervals, its hoarse and ominous note. Several times did it wheel around the head of the lone visitant of its gloomy haunts, till, taking an onward course, it was soon lost to the view.

De Ruse stood awe-struck. But a moment, however, and the power of superstition was over. "O," thought he, "had I but the wings of that solemn tenant of the air, how soon would I fly to that shelter and protection which in an evil hour I was tempted to leave. Yes! honoured being, I have now sufficiently atoned for my imprudence. How would thine heart bleed to see me thus! Perhaps a few hours, and that ominous bird will feed on that breast that now yearns towards thee with the tenderest emotions of gratitude and affection!"

Unable to resist the torrent of his feelings, he retired for a few paces, and casting his wearied frame upon a patch of herbage which grew beneath the shel-

ter of a tall and insulated rock, he soon yielded to the wants of nature, and fell into a deep and profound slumber.

The sun was gone down, and De Ruse still slept. The cold was intense; and, perhaps, he might have slept for ever! A figure, however, now sat upon the opposite bank, attentively and anxiously gazing upon the recumbent form, as it lay still and motionless. Upon his pale and interesting countenance beamed the smile of benevolence and undisguised interest, and his dark and expressive eye remained fixed upon the object before him.

Long was it before he moved. At length the pale star of evening disclosed its pensive beauties over the distant rocks. The figure darted forward, gently shook the sleeping form of De Ruse, and returning to his seat awaited the event. A second and a third time were his efforts vain. At length, with a countenance full of alarm, he raised the slumberer from

the ground, and let him fall with considerable violence upon the turf.

Starting into consciousness, De Ruse with difficulty regained his feet, but finding he was too benumbed with cold to support himself, he leaned against the rock, and endeavoured to recall his recollection. He had dreamed horribly. His enemies had seemed to pursue him from hill to hill, from rock to rock, and even now he fancied he felt the iron grasp of their seizure.

At length, his eyes opened — twilight was deepening into gloom, and to his great amazement, he perceived a figure on the opposite bank earnestly regarding him. With the natural impulse which dictates self-preservation, he put his hands upon the arms which he concealed in his bosom, and boldly demanded the business of the intruder. No answer was returned, but the figure still sat motionless, and earnestly regarding him.

Unable to unravel this mystery, De

Ruse exerted his remaining strength, and made towards the spot where the stranger was. He advanced, however, with pain, for every limb was benumbed with exposure to the frost air. As he moved forwards the other retreated, continually, however, reseating himself, till his pursuer was within speaking distance, then darting onward, though still earnestly gazing upon him.

In this manner, De Ruse suffered himself to be led on for at least half a mile, when the returning warmth of exertion restored at length their usual activity to his limbs. He now quickened his pace, and used every effort to overtake his extraordinary guide. Vainly, however; for suddenly descending one of the cliffs, he disappeared altogether.

De Ruse looked round, uncertain what course to pursue. He was now immediately upon the shore, and a ray of hope burst upon him that there might be some habitation not far distant, where he

might take shelter for the night. He descended the cliff carefully. A few rude steps assisted the descent, and brought him, after turning a dark angle, full in view of one of those wretched abodes, half cave half hut, which are not unknown on the western coasts of England.

By the blaze of a large fire upon the hearth, De Ruse perceived an elderly female busily occupied in her domestic concerns, who, however, hearing the sound of approaching footsteps, came to to the door, loudly and angrily calling out "Godfrey."

On seeing a stranger approach, and make an attempt to enter, she gave a loud scream, and planting herself firmly at the door, began to call out as lustily as she was able. It was in vain, at first, that De Ruse endeavoured to convince her that there was no occasion to fear any thing from him; it was not till she found that no one came to her assistance

that she was compelled to listen to his story.

He assured her that he was a stranger in the country, had lost himself amid the surrounding moors, and had no other motive in his intrusion than merely to ask for a little refreshment, and a temporary shelter from the severity of the season.

The woman still eyed him suspiciously, and while she placed a seat near the fire, and set upon the table a few dried fish and a loaf of coarse bread, she muttered to herself many expressions of doubt as to the reality of his story.

De Ruse was too well educated in the school of adversity to make stumbling blocks of trifles. Accordingly he fell cheerfully to work upon the humble fare before him, and as he experienced the enlivening influence of a warm fire and a roof over his head, he felt thankful for these blessings without troubling himself to find any alloy.

His hostess at length got completely

the better of her fears, and not disliking the frank and open manners of her guest, after allowing him to finish his meal, she began to seek the gratification of that strong female propensity, curiosity.

"And so you lost your way, young man," said she, eyeing him closely; "I should have wondered if you had not. You are one of the first that ever came down here from choice, I'll warrant. I thought for all the world it was poor Godfrey coming home. The lad is very late, however."

"And who is Godfrey?" enquired De Ruse, sharply.

"Then you have seen him?" hastily replied the woman, "he is my son, and a very good son too; but he never speaks, which, if you have met with him would surprize you enough, I dare say."

This explained the seeming inconsistency of what he had lately witnessed, and De Ruse related all that had passed to the good woman, at the same time as-

suring her that his life had been saved by the timely interference of her son.

"Ay, ay — he has a good heart, and a good head too," replied she, while her eyes filled with tears; "and I only wish that the Almighty had been pleased to have ordained him a better lot. Reuben is not kind to him, as he should be, and the poor lad cannot complain or help himself, and that's the worst of it."

The entrance of the husband himself put an end to the subject. He showed no surprize on observing the stranger, but with a familiar nod and easy air he threw himself upon a bench near the fire.

"Where is Godfrey?" enquired his wife, anxiously.

"The lazy cub," exclaimed Reuben impatiently, "I just sent him down to the Hayes to look after the sheep, and he made a three hours' job of it."

"Poor child!" ejaculated the woman, "But where did you leave him, Reuben?"

"Leave him! Why, I sent him back

to the fold; and I let him know that if he did not do the business, and get back too before bed-time, he might sleep on the grass and eat thistles for his supper."

De Ruse, at the conclusion of this speech, looked full in the countenance of the speaker, fully prepared to read his character there.

But he was mistaken. He could observe nothing but an appearance of rude rusticity. Curly locks of a most decided red, shaded a forehead freckled with toil and two large dull eyes, a squat nose, and a pair of coarse thick lips, completed the portrait. He possessed a compact and bony figure, and his broad shoulders, somewhat rounded, showed that he was some little past the meridian of his strength.

It was not till Reuben had finished his evening's repast that his guest ventured to explain the nature of his visit. Nothing however, could be more civil than both

the husband and the wife; and De Ruse speculating upon this, and no little too upon their manifest ignorance, caught at another plan of operations than had before suggested itself.

"Now you must know," said he gaily, "that having through accident arrived in a country so peculiar in itself, I do not feel willing to leave without seeing more of it; and as you seem very comfortable here, I should like of all things, if it would be no inconvenience, to take up my quarters with you some time longer, and if in the way of your occupation and employment I can be of any use, do not fail to command me. You shall find me as active as your son."

"My son!" exclaimed the man, "he's none of mine. Martha can tell you more about that than I can. Now as to your staying here," continued he, heedless of the angry looks and blushes of his helpmate, "you have my leave to stay as

long as you chuse, and do what you like, and as for the rest, you can settle with her."

This ready acquiescence in his wishes afforded no little relief to the mind of De Ruse. He now found himself in possession of a shelter, the remote and almost inaccessible nature of which gave him every prospect of present security; and he was not without hope, that in time something would occur to release him from his perilous situation, and restore him to the bosom of that parent who now looked upon him as irrecoverably lost.

The next morning introduced him to a new train of duties. Though Reuben by no means expected or required his guest to take the least share in his labours, yet De Ruse felt very forcibly that his services during the interval would probably be almost the only remuneration which he should be enabled to make for his entertainment.

He was too prudent, however, to express as much at present, as there appeared in the character of his host, on further acquaintance, a due portion of that selfishness which estimates people only from the weight of their purse. Accordingly, he gave as little trouble, and fared as coarsely, as possible; estimating, that his services, and a small sum which he possessed, would, when he chose to leave, amply counterbalance the temporary convenience which was afforded to him.

Meantime, Godfrey, whom we have already introduced to the acquaintance of our readers, formed a subject of speculation to the compassionate heart of the stranger. The dislike and tyranny of Reuben towards this child of misfortune, was soon accounted for. De Ruse, one day expostulating with him upon the hardships which he forced Godfrey to undergo, received the following answer:—

"That is my own business, and no one's else. Don't I pay Pennington for the sheep walk, and did not I wed his leman, and keep his brat for my own proper use and service? The devil's in it, if the bastard is to play like a lord, while I work like a slave."

De Ruse did not employ any eloquence to controvert this doctrine; but he adopted a far better plan, and one more consonant to the goodness of his own heart. Whenever Godfrey was oppressed by the weight of labour appointed for him, he always found an able and active assistant in his new friend; and whenever the vulgar tyranny of Reuben vented itself in abusive expressions, he was sure to receive smiles of encouragement and double attention from De Ruse and from his mother.

One would naturally conclude, that attentions, so soothing and unostentatious, would have won the heart of the unfortunate, and caused him continually to hover

round those only beings who showed or felt any anxiety for his welfare. But it was far different. Godfrey seemed rather to court the hardships than fly to the alleviations of his condition; and it was only at the morning and evening meal, and when De Ruse insisted upon sharing his daily task, that he held any communion with his mother or the stranger.

Then, too, he appeared with a downcast look, except some peculiar expression, some extraordinary incident, lighted up for a moment all the beaming eloquence of his eyes. At such times, his countenance would indicate a heart full of feeling, and possessed of sentiments and tastes far superior to the lowliness of his condition.

A fortnight thus glided away, and the presence of De Ruse ceased to be considered by the family on the shore as any thing out of the common way; while he, on his paft, became soon familiarized to the situation into which necessity had

thrown him; and, in rambling over the hills, and threading the mazes of the wild vallies with the flocks, he now discovered a species of delight of which he had been hitherto ignorant.

As there is no inconsistency between human conduct and situation which will astonish those who are acquainted with the world and its proceedings, our readers must not think that the rebel Dane, the proclaimed traitor, the outcast soldier of fortune, the secluded inhabitant of the poor hut on the coast, was more absurd than some of his species, when they are informed, that the sweet and compassionate smile of the lovely Rachel was not unfrequently recalled to his imagination during his wild and solitary rambles.

"Perhaps," thought he, and we do not pretend to justify his presumption, "she may again prolong her ride to the bridge in the valley; and if she does, why should there not be as sweet pasture for the flocks there, as there is nearer

home; and in that case, I might enjoy another of those smiles that were before so efficacious."

Accordingly, by the time a fortnight had elapsed, De Ruse knew every glen and the windings of every brook within a considerable distance of the cottage; and by climbing the loftiest summits of the rocks and hills, he was soon enabled to select those for his future occupation from whence he commanded a view most suited to his purpose.

Never was there one, by activity of body and rapidity of conception, better endowed for the arduous situation in which his fortunes had thrown him than De Ruse. Though nurtured in the lap of indulgence, yet his manhood had been hardened by a life of incessant warfare and unceasing exertion, and the toils and fatigues he had been obliged to undergo during his campaign in the north, made his present deprivations comparatively easy and pleasant.

Yet he was not without his fears. His capture by an enraged and remorseless government, he knew, would be the signal for his execution; and though his retreat was as remote and undisturbed as possible, yet he could not on all occasions repress his suspicions of Reuben. In the careless and uninquisitive manner of this man, his guest fancied there was something unnatural; and, accordingly, he kept continually on his guard against the bare possibility of treachery.

When Reuben attended the market of St. Marions, which he did once a week, De Ruse always stationed himself so as to witness his return; intending, had he perceived any further company, to have kept out of their way till he had seen them safely back again. Nothing, however, occurred to justify his suspicions, and his mind became more easy, though he determined not to be less vigilant.

CHAP. VI.

We are not to suppose that Robert Kirkbye, after the abrupt disappearance of his friend, returned home, and as many in the world would have done, satisfied himself from any farther investigation, by the conscious sincerity of his present intentions. His whole manner, during the remainder of the day, was gloomy, restless, and dissatisfied; and he longed for nothing so much as the morning, which by its returning light would enable him again to scour the country in quest of the fugitive.

He was well acquainted with the high and independent feelings of De Ruse, and he shuddered to think how low the recent occurrences at Kilbank must place him and his in the estimation of his gallant but unfortunate friend.

All search, however, was unavailing;

and except the full particulars of the rescue of Julius Pennington from his perilous situation, he could receive no tidings whatever of the past or present movements of him whom he so anxiously sought.

The uneasiness which, in consequence, preyed upon the young man's mind, though purposely disregarded by Mr. Kirkbye, yet did not escape the serious commiseration and attention of his lady. Upon this sole pledge of their union, Mrs. Kirkbye looked with eyes of the most affectionate partiality, and in all Robert's errors, she saw only the movements of an open and a generous spirit. Her indulgence was always proportioned to his father's severity; for at the same time that she lamented the inconsistent display of his paternal feelings, she saw the necessity of frequently counteracting their effects, and making that home agreeable to her son, which, if once deserted, she

clearly foresaw would draw along with it ruinous consequences.

It is not extraordinary, therefore, if, uniting to her affection a mind highly cultivated, and endowed with many sterling qualities, Mrs. Kirkbye possessed great influence over Robert, and acquired for herself, as he grew up, all the open confidence of a friend, as well as the respect and deference due to a parent.

It was not long before she was acquainted with the cause of her son's disquietude; and as he detailed to her in warm and energetic language the nature of his friendship to De Ruse, the many perils they had encountered together, the unconstrained and happy nature of their intercourse, whenever there was a cessation from the bustle of war, and the many professions of unreserved regard and unlimited service which had passed between them, she allowed the justice of his complaints, and promised her sanction and

assistance to any plan he might form for the future security and comfort of his friend.

"You know, my dear Robert," continued she, "that your father is a high party man, and holds himself responsible to his sovereign and the country for the least of his political actions. It is hardly to be expected, therefore, that he should second your views to the extent you would wish, inasmuch as his generosity might involve his credit with the government, if not indeed his personal security, particularly after the part which his own son took in the measures of the disaffected. As to your father's reception of your friend, I know that he regrets the severity of his expressions; and it was only this morning that he assured me that he would not stand in the way of any plan we might mutually form, either for his ultimate escape or his immediate preservation. But he will not appear in it; upon yourself must rest all

the responsibility, and you must use the greatest caution, and be peculiarly circumspect in your measures."

After this conversation, Robert was more satisfied; and as Mr. Kirkbye a few days after was called to London by parliamentary business, he found himself now the perfect master of his own actions, and only waited for information of De Ruse, to fly to his aid, and tender him an immediate asylum from the dangers which surrounded him.

From early childhood Rachel Kemyss had been a great favourite with Mrs. Kirkbye, and received from her a thousand of those little attentions which were most likely to compose the feelings, and win the affections of the beautiful orphan. In the warm heart, and the simply expressive and ingenuous countenance of Rachel, Mrs. Kirkbye saw much to admire; but when she thought upon the waywardness of her destiny, so promising a plant entrusted to a hand so incapable

of rearing and fostering its perfections, she was seized with the desire of averting the threatened ruin, and of contributing such a portion of her aid as might be unobtrusive, and at the same time ensure to her young friend those internal and external advantages which were equally due to her merit and the nobility of her birth.

Mrs. Kirkbye was herself accomplished, and she found means, by an assumed deference to the opinions and prejudices of Lady Anna, to induce that lady to allow her much of the society of her protegée. Glad of an opportunity of recalling those elegant acquirements which had been at once the pride and delight of her younger days, she always made the visits to Kilbank equally useful and agreeable to her young friend. Music and books divided the time with outdoor and in-door recreations; and by making that a source of amusement and constant interest which others are taught

to consider as a burthen and a task, she was amply repaid by the rapid improvement Rachel made in every thing she undertook.

Lady Anna, however, sometimes looked with a jealous eye upon this interference in her own duties, and had she not been flattered and mollified by the mild and conciliating temper of Mrs. Kirkbye, she might have been the means of counteracting those beneficial results which were likely to spring from the enjoyment of such peculiar advantages.

To Rachel the sight of a servant from Kilbank was always the source of genuine delight, because he was generally the bearer of a kind note or a pressing invitation. Often would she sit at the casement of her little boudoir, watching with anxiety the appearance of Mrs. Kirkbye's carriage, as it moved slowly past the ancient oaks that overhung the now untenanted lodge to the mansion; and often when annoyed by the absurdi-

ties, or fatigued with the complaints of Lady Anna, would she retire to her room, and look sorrowfully towards that place which contained the only friend she possessed in the world.

Some time having elapsed since Rachel had seen her kind patroness, she one fine morning obtained her aunt's permission to ride to Kilbank, on condition she would return the following day, as Julius Pennington was to dine at Hurstwood.

Determined to make the most of her time, she rose early and reached Kilbank to breakfast, where she was received with a very hearty welcome by Robert and his mother.

With the former she had been very intimate during their childish days; but his long absence, first at a public school, then at college, and subsequently in the north, if it had not somewhat estranged them, had at least prevented their feelings of infantine attachment from ripening into maturer love. Indeed Robert's

vows and heart were already pledged to a fair Northumbrian, or we might have doubted how far the susceptibility of his nature would have permitted him to withstand attractions such as Rachel's.

An hour's free and unembarrassed converse, however, revived their pristine familiarity of manner; for Rachel felt too deeply the kindness of the mother, not to look upon the son with all the partiality of a sister.

Many a former joke was revived, many amusing scenes recalled to remembrance, till the recital of some trifling incidents accidentally introduced the name of Julius Pennington. Rachel blushed, and for a moment a cloud of serious thought passed over her countenance, and banished the expression of gaiety and mirth. Fearful of committing herself, she made an immediate effort to resume her cheerfulness of manner; but Robert was not to be cheated, and looking earnestly in her face, he asked, with

an expression too arch not to be understood, "Whether report spoke true with regard to the brilliant prospects of that gentleman?"

Rachel now blushed still deeper, and finding she was in a real dilemma, looked towards Mrs. Kirkbye, as if imploring her assistance. Mrs. Kirkbye, however, knowing nothing of the matter, could only smile, and looked surprized. As Robert, however, pressed his question, adding good humouredly, that when children, Rachel had always been remarked amongst her companions for candour and sincerity, and would not on this occasion surely belie the character, she found it necessary to say something; and therefore asked "Whether it was mere curiosity that induced him to propose the question?"

Robert answered, "Not entirely; he had a private reason for wishing to know whether his fair friend was really engaged to Julius."

Rachel looked in his face inquisitively, and after a moment's pause, said, "That she was not."

For the partial gleam that passed over Robert's countenance at this declaration she could not account; but on the conversation being dropped, she treasured it up in her mind as an additional stimulus for circumspection and enquiry.

The next morning the conversation at breakfast assumed a degree of interest which she was almost unwilling to acknowledge. Robert came down with a gloom upon his countenance which was very foreign to his nature, and putting a letter into his mother's hand, requested her to read it. She did so, and as she closed it again, sighed deeply.

"How unfortunate it is," said she, "that in all political convulsions, so much that is noble and spirited and dignified should be sacrificed to what is called public expediency. However just in his own ideas may be the cause in which a

man once draws his sword, yet it is the success of his enterprize which can alone preserve him from the fate and ignominy of a traitor. So nice is the discrimination in the minds of honourable men between private right and public advantage, that when the two clash we must ever have to lament the loss of many, whose talents and whose virtues were admirably calculated to defend and adorn their country. But," continued Mrs. Kirkbye, addressing herself to Rachel, "I must not continue the course of my reflections, till I have made you acquainted with the reason of their being called forth."

Mrs. Kirkbye was about to acquaint her young friend with an outline of the history of De Ruse, concerning whom the letter was written, when Robert, thinking his friend's story could be in no better hands than his own, begged that he might have the pleasure of telling it himself, well knowing that Rachel would excuse, with her wonted good-nature, any

tediousness of description into which he might fall.

With no common interest did she listen to a narration which, though couched in terms of the highest panegyric, yet so abounded with facts descriptive of the noble qualities of the person whose history was thus unfolded, that she did not for a moment conceive the style too warm or too elevated for the subject.

Pity for his misfortunes, admiration for his courage and his endurance, and esteem for his humanity and the generous nature of his friendship, alternately took possession of the mind of Rachel, as she listened to the recital ; and it by no means detracted from the interest which she took in the story, when she recognized in the friend and comrade of Robert Kirkbye, the very person whom she had met at the little bridge which crosses the river Barle.

" And yet," continued Robert, as he concluded his story, " after all the in-

timacy which existed between us, after having associated together with the confidence of brothers, it is very extraordinary that I could never extract from De Ruse any satisfactory account of his parentage or connections. On this subject he was always very vague, and would always give one to understand that his friends must love him for his own sake, as he had nothing else in the world which could recommend him to their attachment. General Gordon, however, told my uncle that his father was an officer high in the Danish service; but as he said no more about him, I conclude he must have risen from an inferior station."

Rachel, as she listened, did not conclude any such thing, for she thought that one so highly gifted with mental and personal endowments, could scarcely fall short in that particular which she had always been taught to regard as of the highest importance, viz. respectability of birth.

From the story of De Ruse, the conversation naturally turned to the subject of the letter which Robert had that morning opened, (according to his father's direction) it being addressed to the magistrates of the division. Within it were secret orders contained for the arrest of an officer of the rebel army, who had been traced from the western coast to the neighbourhood of St. Marions.

The description so perfectly answered to the appearance of De Ruse, when he called at Kilbank, that Robert shuddered with dread as he perused it; and when he saw the reward offered for his apprehension, he could not conceive how it would be possible for one to escape the toils that were closing around him, who was moneyless, famishing for want, and a perfect stranger to the country. What his intentions were, however, towards his friend, he did not chuse to declare; but merely requested Rachel to forget, or if not forget, at least not to disclose what

she had heard. She hastily promised, at the same time acknowledging her consciousness of the confidence placed in her discretion.

As the morning was now far advanced, the poney was ordered to the door, and Robert, after accompanying his fair friend beyond the park gates, returned to his mother to consider fresh plans for the preservation of De Ruse.

"I was astonished at your bluntness, Robert," said Mrs. Kirkbye, as he entered the room, "in so broadly questioning Rachel about Julius Pennington, and particularly as the report turns out to be mere idle gossip."

"If I had thought otherwise, perhaps I should not have asked the question," replied he. "I own, however, that my curiosity got the better of my good breeding, and I will endeavour, in future, to make up for my apparent rudeness."

"But you said you had a reason for

the question," observed Mrs. Kirkbye, "now I cannot conceive what it could have been. Perhaps you would rather not inform me."

"So far from that, my dear mother," replied Robert, "I shall have great pleasure in doing so if you wish it. In the first place, I am inclined to give Julius every credit that he deserves for a noble exterior and insinuating manners; but I must own, that I do not admire his principles of action. Amongst many examples, let me give you one. De Ruse saved his life not a fortnight ago, at the imminent risk of his own, and without staying for his acknowledgments, placed him in safe hands and retired. And what has been the reward of his humanity? Julius Pennington is at this moment leading the pursuit of his enemies, and seeking in open day the destruction of his benefactor! Now, I would ask simply, is such a man the hus-

band that your favourite, Rachel Kemyss, would voluntarily chuse for herself? If not, whose duty is it to open her eyes?

"Certainly not your's, Robert. It is dangerous for indifferent persons to meddle in such delicate affairs. Rachel has sufficient penetration to judge for herself."

"Granted: yet she is awkwardly situated," replied Robert; "and in my opinion, if she is not well advised, she will fall a sacrifice to the cabals of old Pennington, and that silliest of women, Lady Anna."

"I hope not," replied Mrs. Kirkbye, with a deep sigh, which too manifestly corroborated the more hasty opinion her son had formed.

CHAP. VII.

During the preceding conversation, Rachel, unconscious of the sombre forebodings of her friends, was slowly proceeding towards Hurstwood, certainly more engrossed with feelings of pity for the dangerous situation of the unfortunate Dane, than with pleasing anticipations on her approaching meeting with Julius Pennington. On the subject of this connection, her feelings were very indefinite. She admired, and still she distrusted him; and even when most fascinated with the brilliancy of his wit, and the lively sallies of his imagination, her pleasure would not unfrequently receive something like a check, when she thought of him as the sole arbiter of her destiny.

It was from the incongruity of these sensations that she determined to suspend

her judgment, and prevent, by any hasty decision, a mode of conduct in the affair, of which she might hereafter have reason to repent.

Nothing can be more embarrassing to a young woman of sense, than the necessity of deciding on a question of such vital importance, before her feelings are fixed on the firm basis of partiality or indifference. When rank and fortune, personal and mental attractions, woo her acceptance, it is not without mature thought that she either receives or abandons them. The test must be, how far her feelings will allow her to perform the duties of the situation offered to her acceptance, and how far she can do justice to the affection which proposes to place her in it.

If every female would, from these motives, pause upon the threshold of the fane of Hymen, how much misery would be spared to mankind! The heart would not be so frequently sacrificed to gran-

deur; and the noble and wealthy husband would not so frequently have cause to complain of the ingratitude of her whom he had raised to his own rank, and placed in his bosom, in the expectation of possessing an ornament to his family, and a never failing source of earthly comfort to himself.

The dinner waited when Rachel arrived at home. Julius had been there all morning; and though there was evident mortification depicted in his countenance when he rose to meet her, yet he stood forward as her successful advocate with Lady Anna, who was proceeding with much acrimony to comment upon her stay at Kilbank.

"It is astonishing, Rachel," said she, with a glance which she meant should be penetrating, "what there can be at Kilbank Hall to draw you there so constantly. I should think that Hurstwood had equal attractions, particularly on such an occasion as the present," and she bowed to Julius.

Rachel felt half indignant at these insinuations, but she maintained her usual submissive silence. Dinner passed somewhat heavily. She felt but little inclined to tolerate the petty tyrannies of her aunt, or admit the gallantries of Julius, a circumstance which, while it increased the irritability of the former, threw a degree of sedateness over the manner and conversation of the latter. Rachel's mind was fully occupied with the story she had heard in the morning, and she could not conceal from herself the interest she took in the safety and welfare of the gallant foreigner.

"Would that my knowledge of his route avail any thing towards his preservation!" thought she, as closing the door of her own apartment, she seated herself at the open casement. "To relieve the distressed is always noble, and perhaps the more peculiar property of our sex. I wish I had mentioned our meeting at the bridge to Robert; it

might have given him some clue to discover and to aid his friend."

She had scarcely ended this soliloquy, ere the voice of Julius was distinctly heard below. He was returning to St. Marions, and giving some directions to his servant. We may easily imagine the astonishment and dismay of Rachel, when she found the purport of those orders to be, the intended capture of De Ruse. He had been tracked to the bridge of Barle; and information had been procured that he was still in the neighbourhood, concealed amid those wild fastnesses that skirted the ocean.

There are times when those who possess feeling are almost irresistibly brought under its influence, so as to regard but little either present appearances or future consequences. The consciousness of a right intention deadens any scruples that reason may suggest.

"Sweet mercy," says the poet, is nobility's true badge; and so felt Rachel.

She despised the soul that could humble itself to trample upon the unfortunate, and hunt him from his wretched retreat with the remorseless fury of a blood-hound. Julius would not have returned so gaily to his home, had he known the impression produced by his conduct on the mind of his mistress. Mistress indeed *he* conceived she was; but the words she had accidentally overheard that night, shook to their very foundation even the common partialities of friendship.

The noble rescue of young Pennington by De Ruse, for that it was De Ruse that rescued him Robert had that morning informed her, appeared to Rachel deserving of so different a reward from that which he was about to reap, that she was induced to pause in her censures, thinking that Julius surely could not be aware that he was persecuting that very individual to the death who had once saved his life.

"But he shall know," exclaimed she with ardour; "and his subsequent conduct shall be to me the index of his worth."

One o'clock the ensuing day had been fixed by Julius to meet his creatures at the bridge of Barle, in order that they might pursue their enquiries after the fugitive. Rachel accordingly determined to ride thither in the morning, and thus in all probability procure an opportunity of mentioning the subject, and gain a cessation from persecution at least, if not, by her mediation, ensure a friend for the unfortunate De Ruse. She would have given the world to have seen Robert Kirkbye, and have acquainted him with the retreat of his friend; but there was no chance of accomplishing this object, and she felt the blush warm upon her cheek as she recalled to mind the reasons of her silence.

The morning at length dawned. Rachel, throwing a light robe around her

beautiful form, and folding it over a bosom as fair and spotless as the heart contained within it, advanced to the window, and withdrawing the drapery, looked eagerly to the heavens.

The night had been stormy and wet. The river, swelled by an encrease of waters, rolled along with resistless impetuosity, in many places overleaping its banks, and covering with a broad sheet the more distant lowlands of the valley. The sky, however, was now clear, the sun shone, and nothing but a thick haze upon the horizon, and a few partial gusts now remained of the late concussion of the elements.

Rachel immediately dressed herself, and on gaining the breakfast-room, was pleased to be informed that her aunt did not intend leaving her apartment till noon. This of course left her at liberty to act as she pleased, and accordingly, after making a hasty meal, she summoned

John Drew, and requested him to saddle the poney.

John, wondering what could induce his young lady to ride so soon after such heavy rains, and before indeed the waters that swelled the brooks and deluged the roads had quite subsided, obeyed in silence; but when he assisted her to mount could not help remarking, that it was dangerous to go far from the house, if she wished to avoid a "sousing;" for though the sun shone, yet he was mistaken if the mist and wind did not threaten as foul a storm as ever, before night closed in.

Rachel promised that she would attend to his advice, and hoping she should be able to return before any change took place, she hastened forward towards the hills.

After emerging from the woods that backed the mansion, Rachel found the slopes of the downs so free from wet,

and the air so genial and exhilarating, that she lost all recollection of John Drew's cautions, and delighted to inhale the first breezes of the infant spring, and observe the earliest signs of returning vegetation, she loitered somewhat imprudently at the commencement of her ride, a circumstance she repented of, when having reached the wilder hills she found the roads scarcely passable.

Accustomed, however, to a country life, and possessing a frame unenervated by the confinement, the gaieties, and the sedentary pursuits of large cities, Rachel would scarcely allow those to be inconveniences which others would regard as insuperable difficulties. She accordingly dashed forward, intent only on the object of her expedition.

Already was she in sight of the bridge. Its ivied arch was seen at the extremity of the valley, guarding as it were the entrance into the deep mountain-pass beyond, while the stream which it com-

passed, swelled to a raging torrent, rushed along its rocky bed, roaring and foaming in its course.

Rachel had now reached the summit of an abrupt eminence over which the road passed, its base being washed by the rapid waters of the brook. Here she paused, and surveying the extent of the vale on both sides, looked anxiously for some sign of the approach of the expected party. No human being, however, but herself, seemed to invade the deep solitude of the surrounding scene — no noise broke upon the stillness of the air, but the softened murmurings of the stream, and the occasional bleatings of a flock browsing on a distant hill.

From the vale below her eyes were now raised to the heavens. A few straggling vapours scudded along the blue concave, the forerunners of a dark mass of clouds which now appeared slowly advancing above the horizon. Here and there a tree bent its lofty head, and

shook its leafless branches as in obeisance to the mighty spirit of the storm. Nevertheless an unusual tranquillity began to reign in the atmosphere, an awful stillness, which often precedes a tempest. The birds sought the thickets, the flocks hastened to the deep coverts of the wood, and even nature herself seemed awed into the solemn silence of expectation.

Rachel looked around in silent dismay. It would be impossible to reach Hurstwood before the tempest overtook her, and to encounter its violence on the open and unprotected downs, she was well aware would be dangerous in the extreme. No time was to be lost. She determined, therefore, to hasten to the bridge of Barle, and making good her passage before the brook was too much swelled to allow it, she purposed to return by the road on the left bank, which keeping the lower grounds would leave

her less exposed, even should she fail in procuring a shelter.

The mountain poney on which she rode, united with peculiar beauty all the spirit of its species. Rachel soon gained the bridge, and was in the act of turning the abrupt angle where she had first met with De Ruse, when casting her eyes around, they fell upon the shattered roof of a dilapidated hovel, reared against one side of the arch, and somewhat protected by the battlement which in that part remained perfect.

A few large drops of rain had already fallen. Sudden gusts had begun to arise, and as quickly subsided. The mighty phalanx of clouds was now over her head. One moment more, and the fury of the tempest would burst upon her.

Hastily dismounting, she led her poney towards the hovel, and finding a convenient entrance, was soon able to congratulate herself upon her escape. The storm

commenced. Furiously did the hurricane sweep the valley and riot on the hills. The rain fell in torrents. The din of a hundred cataracts resounded from the rocky declivities. The trees bent almost to their roots, and some even were levelled with the ground. Large stones, intermingled with vast masses of soil loosened from the banks, were carried along by the stream. Nature seemed at war with herself!

Fearfully, beneath the frail shelter of the thatched roof, did Rachel listen to the furious uproar without. A moment's reflection made her astonished at the temerity which had brought her so far from home, in the very face as it were of the elements. The awkwardness of her present situation, stripped this questionable expedition of the romantic cast with which it had been arrayed. She began to think that her interference ought not to have been personal; and that should she even meet with Julius, any mention

of De Ruse from her would certainly betray the secret of his connection with Robert Kirkbye.

These reflections, which ought perhaps to have presented themselves previously, quite unnerved the spirits of the fair orphan. She felt that her conduct, though arising from the purest motives, might still be misconstrued, and she wished now for nothing so much as to avoid any meeting with him, whom a moment before she had looked for with such unusual anxiety.

Oppressed with these thoughts, and conscious of the unpleasant questioning that must result from her late return to Hurstwood, she could not refrain from tears, and her voice obeying the impulse of her feelings, she deprecated aloud the folly of supposing that her interference could benefit De Ruse.

She started as the words escaped from her lips, and involuntarily gazed around the gloomy recess, as fearful of some wit-

ness of her indiscretion. A shriek, and a sudden attempt to rush from the place, proved the truth of her surmise. There was indeed another being who, like herself, had sought the shelter of that solitary hut. One who had witnessed her entrance with a delight only exceeded by his astonishment — one who had gazed with silent and respectful admiration upon the native beauties of her form and features — one who would have compassed sea and land to witness what he now witnessed, — in short, it was De Ruse himself!

Not one look, not one word, had been lost upon him; and finding himself discovered, he now darted forward, and by timely interposition, prevented an egress which might have been attended with fatal consequences.

Rachel shocked, humiliated, trembling with agitation, and pale with terror, had now no power to resist the gentle violence of the arm that detained her. She re-

turned to her position, and having neither the capability nor the will to speak, she leaned her head upon the neck of her poney, and remained silent.

De Ruse, briefly apologizing for the fright he had so unintentionally caused, and begging her to be under no alarm, retired respectfully to the further end of the hovel, as if fearful of being intrusive.

Rachel was some time ere she recovered herself. When she did, the extreme awkwardness of her situation struck her so forcibly, that the natural dignity of her feelings was aroused, and she determined to rescue herself from the embarrassment under which she laboured, by a further exercise of that spirit of candour which had in so extraordinary a manner produced it. Summoning up all her resolution, she raised herself from her reclining posture, and in a faint voice asked De Ruse, "If he was not the person whom she had before had the pleasure of meeting ?"

Delighted at her recomposure, he sprung forward, and advancing towards her, replied that "he had been so fortunate."

"Your name is—is De Ruse, is it not?"

The young Dane bowed, and looked inquisitively for an explanation of this extraordinary exordium.

"You are the intimate friend of Robert Kirkbye — and of his mother?"

"Of the former, certainly," replied De Ruse. "I have not the honour of knowing the latter."

"Then, sir," continued Rachel, while her voice trembled with agitation, "your life is in danger. This very hour are men from St. Marions in pursuit of you. I heard this accidentally, and knowing the leader of the party, directed my usual ride this way, to intercede in Mrs. Kirkbye's name, for the life of her son's friend. Alas! I was but little aware of the awkwardness of the task I undertook.'

"May heaven, fair lady, reward you for it!" exclaimed De Ruse, while with all the gallantry of the time he sunk on one knee, and fervently kissed the hem of her robe. "Alas! I never can. It is denied to a poor wretch like myself to display any gratitude, further than by those inadequate expressions which such a moment's interview will allow."

Rachel, in spite of her distress, could not help admiring the grace of the movement, nor contrasting the elegance of the young Dane's address and manner with the meanness of his habiliments. In a short time she became more reassured, and when she reflected upon the high character for probity and honour which Robert had given of his friend, she was able, with little apparent constraint, to enter into a conversation with the person whom chance, not design, had so fortunately for himself thrown in her way.

"My appearance here," observed Rachel, to her new friend, "carries so much

the character of knight errantry with it, that I should be wrong to neglect such an opportunity of explaining my motives. For my own part, I am too much of a woman, and too little of a politician, to approve of the rancorous prosecution of a fallen enemy ; and I confess, that under any circumstances but those of real crime, I should be weak enough at least, to concede my good wishes to the oppressed. When, therefore, I understood that Mr. Pennington was pursuing the intimate friend of Robert Kirkbye, with an ardour which under circumstances must be unwitting in his case, I could see no great trouble or inconvenience, having the opportunity thrown in my way, in acting as a mediator between the parties, who are my personal friends, and thus gratifying my own inclination by saving a fellow-creature from almost certain destruction. This is the whole history of this morning's expedition."

De Ruse bowed, and continued for a

moment silent. Perhaps he would have wished Rachel's interference not to have rested on such general principles. He wished it could have been for his sake alone. Yet how could that be? He was, as yet, a stranger to her. He was an outcast, a foreigner, poor, and even possessing life itself by the precarious tenure of a day. Ah no! it could not be! more than his share of pity with other unfortunate beings he must never hope for.

Rachel observing his dejection, and attributing it to the perilous situation in which he then stood, began "to hope, that by the timely notice he had received, he might be able to effect his escape from the country in time to render all pursuit abortive."

De Ruse shook his head, and in a voice rather melancholy than desponding, replied, "That to him fortune had now nearly done her worst. Life was all he had left, and no brighter prospects at present dawned upon him. Strange as

it might seem, he felt no wish to leave the country, and those who pursued the gallant stag to his last shelter, should reflect that he sometimes made his despair the destruction of his enemies."

While Rachel wondered at this infatuation, she could not help remarking how well the activity and muscular strength of the form before her gave an earnest of his power to put in execution his last threat. She shuddered at the thought of such an alternative, and stood absorbed in reflection.

The storm at length began to clear off, and she felt very impatient to be gone, hoping, by her speedy return to Hurstwood, she might avoid any rencontre with Julius Pennington. This she was now more than ever peculiarly anxious to do.

Accordingly looking out, and casting her eyes upwards, she saw from the breaks in the clouds, and the occasional glimpses of blue sky, that the fury of the tempest

was spent, and that in all probability she might return with safety in a very short space. It yet, however, rained heavily, and she was about to resume her former post, when the rapid tread of horses struck upon her ear.

It must be Julius Pennington! Conscious of the extreme awkwardness of her own situation, and of the imminent danger of De Ruse, her heart beat so violently, and her frame was so agitated, that it was with difficulty she at first supported herself; but gathering in a moment energy from the critical state of things, she rushed suddenly forward, and seizing the arm of De Ruse with a convulsive motion, conjured him, in a voice half suffocated with contending emotions, to make his escape immediately.

"Go, fly or we are lost! Fly as you regard your own life — I entreat you; do not hesitate a moment. It is Julius Pennington!"

De Ruse, astonished at the suddenness

of these exclamations, was about to question their purport, when the clamour of voices, and the noise of approaching footsteps, convinced him they were not without foundation. Rachel had informed him of the intended pursuit, and he naturally conjectured, from the agitation of his fair friend, that these were the persons sent forth to capture him, who were now at the very threshold of accomplishing their purpose. He felt too for the delicacy of Rachel, in being discovered by her friends in a situation at best so equivocal.

His eye glanced wildly around. He stepped to the entrance, and looked cautiously out, then with a sudden and powerful bound gained the roof of the hovel, and forcing his way with little difficulty through a shattered corner, he disappeared in an instant.

Scarcely had De Ruse made good his escape, ere the party without entered, and it was owing to this cause, probably,

that the fugitive for the moment escaped observation.

Julius preceded, bearing in his countenance and appearance manifest signs of the rude treatment he had received from the elements. At the sight of a female, he was advancing with the utmost familiarity, when seeing in the pale, horror-struck and agitated face before him, the perfect semblance of her whom he now looked upon as his destined bride, he started back. Again advancing, and scrutinizing her still more nearly, he lifted up his hands with an exclamation of unaffected surprize. "Impossible! Rachel here, and such a day too? For heaven's sake tell me what can have brought a fair lady to such a wretched place as this, and on a day too when the demon of the storm himself would have scarcely ventured to be abroad?"

Rachel had no time to answer, for one of the party who had loitered behind vociferated loudly that a man was at

that moment carried away by the stream. The face of Rachel, which had begun to be crimsoned by the questions of Julius, now resumed its previous ashy paleness; she clung to his arm for support, and closing her eyes as if to escape some dreadful vision, exclaimed in a voice now scarcely audible, from the nature of her conflicting feelings — "Save him, Julius! oh, in mercy save him!"

"Who must we save, who is there drowning?" exclaimed Julius, more and more amazed with what he saw and heard. "Surely there is some mystery in all this. Be composed," said he, addressing Rachel, "I will go out and see myself what is the matter."

Rachel was now alone in the hovel. The misfortunes of the morning seemed wound up to their pitch. Every moment did she expect to hear of the untimely end of him with whom she had so recently conversed, and who had already excited no common interest in her bosom.

At length her anxiety was relieved by the re-appearance of Julius. He seemed thoughtful, and looked once or twice around the place with a suspicious eye.

The heart of Rachel beat audibly. She felt almost like a criminal in the presence of a judge. She dared not to venture an enquiry; but with her eyes cast upon the ground, awaited in silence for the information she so intensely desired.

"It is one of the strangest scenes," observed Julius, after a pause, "that I think ever came within my notice. On going out just now I saw a man hurried along by the current, who, instead of exerting his force to reach the bank nearest to us, which he might easily have accomplished, seemed only intent on keeping clear of the rocks, and affecting a landing at a considerable distance lower down, just where the upper road to Hurstwood skirts the valley. With great danger and difficulty he reached that point;

and regardless of all our shouts and our anxiety to render him assistance, he darted up the hill side, and disappeared in the old grove of firs which look towards Kilbank."

The remainder of the party now entered, all expressing their surprize at the mysterious conduct of the runaway, and all forward in their conjectures as to his motives in so desperately avoiding them. Julius alone expressed no opinion. His countenance at once displayed inquietude and suspicion ; and he left the hovel when the storm subided, with a full determination of knowing more than he at present ventured to ask.

Our readers may easily imagine the embarrassed state in which Rachel now found herself. Though the natural delicacy of her feelings prompted her to an unreserved declaration of the motives by which she was influenced in visiting the wild valley of the Barle, yet the consciousness that her candour would

draw down almost certain destruction on the head of De Ruse, deterred her from offering at present that explanation which the lowering features and suspicious glances of Julius Pennington seemed indirectly to demand.

We will leave her, however, to prosecute her unpleasant ride homewards, whither Julius undertook to accompany her, and we will turn aside from the ratings and invectives and scrutinizing glances of Lady Anna, and the disagreeable *et cetera* that awaited her return, to follow our gallant Dane in his progress after his escape from the fascinations of his lovely friend, the horrors of a watery grave, and the grasp of his astonished pursuers.

CHAP. VIII.

How desirable, how delightful is even one moment's repose, either when the spirits have been borne down by mental agitations, or the body wearied and debilitated by an excess of anxious toil! The gallant stag and the timid hare, the soaring eagle and the skulking wild-fowl, after eluding the deadly hate of their enemies, all enjoy the profound repose of the impervious thicket or the impregnable rock, with a pleasure heightened by past dangers and sufferings. Far from the hated and startling haunts of men, they again breathe freely,—they start no longer at the rippling stream, nor fly with apprehension and alarm—perchance some straying zephyr stirs among the bending branches.

Alas! poor De Ruse, when pausing

amid the thick and gloomy grove of firs that skirted the summit of the lofty hill he had ascended, found no such pleasing topics for reflection. Chilled to the very heart, and bruised in every limb with the long immersion he had undergone in a torrent swelled with the mighty fragments it hurried along in its course, he found a faintness beginning rapidly to overspread his exhausted frame, and felt too sensibly, that though he might have escaped the ignominious death of a traitor, yet his end was not far distant, if some unexpected assistance did not very speedily arrive.

Delay, however, in his case was certain death. His only chance was to reach the shelter of some friendly roof, and resting there till the smart of his recent bruises was somewhat abated, make for the coast, and work his way home in the first vessel that offered.

The reflection was melancholy; and for the first time since the commencement

of his misfortunes, the tear of anguish trembled in his eye. To Reuben's cottage on the shore he dared not to return, fearful that his retreat there had been discovered by the treachery of his host; and supposing that the party from whom he had just escaped were actually on their way thither. There was no alternative. Go he must, or his life would pay the price of his temerity. Mr. Kirkbye, the father of his friend, Julius Pennington, probably the lover of Rachel, (or why should she seek a meeting with him in the valley of the Barle?) appeared equally as obstacles to his seeking relief at the only places where his friends had the power to afford it.

His situation was desperate. Faint, wounded, and wearied as he was, he every moment dreaded to hear the sound of approaching enemies. What chance should he then have of preserving his existence, already forfeited to the laws

of that country in which he had drawn the sword of rebellion?

The blood, which mental agitation and the strong law of immediate self-preservation had caused to circulate rapidly in his veins, and had upheld thus far exertions which appeared to the witnesses almost supernatural, now chill and feeble, scarce animated the frame through which it flowed. Urged, however, by necessity, De Ruse crawled along, clinging for occasional support and rest to the stunted thorns and bushes, which alone broke the heathy surface of the hills after he had emerged from the more lofty shelter of the grove.

It was some time before sun-set that he reached the high range of downs which seemed a kind of boundary between the sterility of the mountainous region towards the coast and the more fertile plains of the interior.

Here he chanced to meet with a shep-

herd, who at his earnest request directed him to the nearest cottage, which happened to be the residence of an old man who supported himself by ferrying passengers across the river.

Conscious as he was that the publicity of such a retreat did not well suit with the peculiarity of his circumstances, he refused the old man's offer of a temporary shelter; and desiring to be landed on the opposite bank, soon found himself on the public road that passed between Kilbank and St. Marions.

Uncertain how to act, for his bruises began now to be so painful that he found it would soon be impossible for him to proceed further, he paused for a moment, and deliberated with himself how far it would be feasible to entangle himself in the interior of the country, rather than by following the course of the river, and boldly repassing the town of St. Marions, to reach the coast at some port where

he might have a probability of embarking.

As these speculations were, however, at present useless, except as they determined his course to the right hand or to the left in search of present succour, he was about to betake himself to a cottage betrayed by its smoke on the edge of a neighbouring wood, when the approach of a person on horseback arrested his attention.

As he came nearer, De Ruse had no difficulty in discovering his friend Robert Kirkbye. His steed was covered with foam and dirt, and his own appearance likewise betrayed evident symptoms of his having been exposed to the dreadful storm which had raged in the morning.

Not made of those silly and mean materials which owns no difference between the conduct of a man and his connections, De Ruse felt not the slightest particle of resentment towards his friend, and did

not now regret the opportunity of proving it.

The meeting was that of excessive astonishment and joy on the one hand, and of unfeigned cordiality on the other.

"Only think," said Robert, as he dismounted, his eyes beaming with delight, "I was returning after a whole day of disappointment, anxiety, and fatigue, and now I just come upon the game at my own door. Could any thing have been more a-propos? You must come with me immediately to Kilbank, and allow us to make up for past offences. I assure you, I have scarcely had a night's rest or an hour's comfort since you played me such a proud trick, as to disappear without receiving from me one word in extenuation of my father's conduct."

At this moment his eyes glanced more nearly upon the countenance and figure of his friend, and he was horror-struck at his ghastly and miserable appearance.

"De Ruse — Harry," exclaimed he, in a tone of the deepest sympathy and alarm, "tell me what has happened? Alas! I fear my conjectures have been but too well founded. You have been pursued by Pennington, wounded, hunted down like a wild beast of the forest, and were flying for shelter — where? — I fear not to Kilbank. You shall, however, both forgive and forget. My father is absent from the country; he left me his permission, and without delay you shall become our guest, and receive all those attentions to which you are so well entitled!"

De Ruse felt himself too weak either to answer or oppose this proposition; and conducted by Robert, who compelled him to mount his horse, he soon reached the shelter of that roof from which he had been so lately driven with every aggravating expression of insult. By a private door was he admitted to an apartment which had been previously pre-

pared for his reception in case he could be found; and by the friendly attentions of Robert, every thing was immediately procured which could mitigate the pain of his bruises, and restore exhausted nature to her wonted vigour.

When left to himself, De Ruse listened to the departing footsteps of his friend, and when they had died away along the distant passages he secured his door, and instead of immediately seeking that repose which he so much needed, threw himself on a seat before the blazing hearth, and gave way to the crowd of mournful reflections that now rushed at once upon his mind.

A something not unpleasing had attended his residence in the neighbourhood of St. Marions, notwithstanding the hardships he had been obliged to endure, and the dangers to which he had been exposed. In allowing the strange unwillingness he felt, to leave a country in which, at the hazard of his life, he con-

tinued to reside, there appeared to him no motive of sufficient importance; and he therefore was obliged to place it to the score of unaccountable human caprice. Certain, however, it was, he still lingered, and was likely to linger. The mountains, the vallies, the wild streamlets, and the more majestic river, all seemed now to claim a place, not only in his imagination, which was alive to all the beauties of nature, but likewise in his very affections.

"Surely," thought De Ruse, "it cannot be woman that throws an interest, a spell of enchantment, over scenes which, though beautiful in themselves, yet to one situated as I am can scarcely be supposed to claim a thought. Woman alas!" and a deep sigh escaped his bosom; "woman should have no attractions for a wretched, persecuted being like me. What have I to do with the blandishments of life, when even existence itself hangs upon so bare a thread? O

no! I am not surely so weak as to encourage feelings which can only end in disappointment — to rush madly towards the possession of that which is far, far above my grasp. Down, then, impetuous passion! Reason shall be invincible; and, to his other misfortunes, De Ruse shall never have to add the pangs of despised and rejected love!"

That generous pride which misfortune often fosters now burnt on his cheek. For the moment he withdrew his mind from the consideration of recent events, and all his thoughts were directed to that period when he might have it in his power to tender the rites of filial affection, and redeem, by future obedience, all remembrance of former errors.

The next subject of cogitation which occupied him was the nature of his situation at Kilbank. A very little reflection convinced him that Robert Kirkbye was sacrificing somewhat imprudently at the shrine of friendship; and in proportion

as his own gratitude exceeded on that account, so did he feel it unjust to tax generosity too far, perhaps to the ruin of his benefactor. This determined him to take immediate steps for leaving the country; and he retired to rest, with the resolution of stating his intention to his friend in the morning, and of concerting those measures with him, by which his purpose might be most successfully accomplished.

CHAP. IX.

RACHEL, the morning after her expedition to the valley of the Barle, was listlessly arranging some snow-drops and early primroses in a glass at a small side table, when the seldom used terms of endearment caused her to cease from her employment, and turn hastily round. It was her aunt, and surprize, half mingled with a sort of incredulous pleasure, took immediate possession of her features.

"My dear Rachel," said Lady Anna, while her rigid features relaxed into a something approaching a smile, "I have been thinking this morning of a plan, to which I am sure you can have no reasonable objection. Let me hear you say that you will not?"

Rachel, who was shrewd enough to conjecture that a mode of address so un-

usual must be dictated by some motive of correspondent import, replied generally, "that when her aunt thought proper to propose, it was of course her duty to obey. If she was at any time induced to do otherwise, she should have the most substantial reasons for her conduct." Without looking to observe how this speech was taken, she busied herself at the breakfast table, not at all anxious for the developement of a plan, which she could not but augur would prove disagreeable to her in some way or other.

"I have been thinking," resumed Lady Anna, "that it is my duty in the present advanced state of the affair, to inform my brother, Lord Norland, of the intended alliance between his niece and the Penningtons of St. Marions."

Rachel started, grew pale, and dropping the piece of china which she held in her hand, looked up in her aunt's face with a countenance full of surprize and indignant feeling. The latter, however,

was but the flush of a moment. She stooped to gather up the broken fragments of the frail material she had dropped, and strove by these means to hide her confusion.

"Now, in my opinion," continued her ladyship, too indulgently inclined to notice Rachel's carelessness, "the thing cannot be done by letter; for as Mr. Pennington very justly observes, it will be necessary not merely to obtain his lordship's consent, but likewise to ascertain what are his ultimate intentions towards yourself. It is therefore absolutely requisite that I should see him, and of course the sooner the better. Now my proposition is as follows:—As Hurstwood, when I am gone, will be dull and lonely, I am just going to write to Mrs. Pennington, to offer you as her guest at St. Marions till my return. In informing you of this arrangement, I have not of course anticipated the least objection, but merely thought to oblige you by an

early intimation of the pleasure you are about to enjoy."

In saying, however, that she anticipated no objection, Lady Anna was belying her real sentiments. She did foresee obstacles, and took the above method to forestall them.

Rachel, without returning any direct answer, continued silent and abstracted till the meal was concluded, the only way in which she had as yet ventured to express her disapprobation.

Lady Anna, who was no adept in the art of dissimulation, no sooner perceived that her project was ill received, than she threw off that kindness of manner which was so foreign to her nature, and arraying her countenance in all the irresistible terrors of her high displeasure, vented the epithets of "ungrateful," "unworthy," "childish," and "ridiculous," upon a dissent which, though not unexpected, had not yet been verbally expressed, and declared it her intention to

dispatch the note forthwith, and insist upon her niece's adopting a measure to which she might have known it would have been her interest to have voluntarily acceded.

With all her softness of disposition, Rachel inherited too much of the spirit of her father, to suffer herself to be thus tamely trampled upon. In things of less importance, her conduct exhibited nothing but uniform obedience and submission; but when she reflected that her aunt was assuming to herself the sole disposal of her destinies; that one so prejudiced and ignorant, so devoid of feeling and tenderness, was about, for the gratification of her own selfish plans, to plunge her into a situation from which it would be impossible, should she wish it, to extricate herself with honour, she found it necessary to speak out, and therefore, in as soft a tone as she could assume, ventured to remind Lady Anna that such a journey as she spoke of was

unnecessary, in as much as no positive connection as yet subsisted between Julius Pennington and herself.

"You really amaze me, child, by your ignorance!" was the reply of the tyrannical aunt. "How dare you say that no connection exists, when you have consented to receive the attentions of young Mr. Pennington?"

"I did indeed promise him my friendship, but he could imply no more," was the answer of Rachel.

"But he does imply more," rejoined Lady Anna, "and so does all the world. Your approaching marriage is the talk of the country; and I stand pledged that the expectations you have raised shall not be disappointed."

"I have raised no expectations," replied Rachel firmly, and therefore I can be the cause of no disappointment. Julius himself will acquit me from any such imputation."

"Then do you intend to tell me seriously," said Lady Anna, with one of

her looks of scorn, "that you will not marry the person to whom you are so solemnly engaged? What will the world say of your frequent interviews, your great intimacy, your rides and your walks, and what is most of all, of those strange meetings among the hills and vallies, which seem to take place in spite of storms and tempests which convulse the very heavens themselves?"

Here her aunt gave so bitter, so remorseless a laugh, that Rachel, shocked, grieved, and embarrassed, looked upon the ground, and refused to answer.

At length, however, as Lady Anna persisted in her intention of writing to Mrs. Pennington, Rachel, conscious of the indelicacy of the proceeding, decidedly assured her aunt that the note would only compel her to give offence, as she had not the remotest intention of acting according to its contents; and as to the visit to Lord Norland, if it was on her account, she by no means authorized

any mention of the affair to him or to any one else.

Obliged to give up the intended visit to St. Marions, Lady Anna still persisted in her determination of seeing Lord Norland, assuring her niece, with much hauteur, that it was not *her* unimportant concerns, but affairs of higher importance, things which concerned herself, that constituted the necessity of the expedition.

It was, therefore, after much abusive language, arranged, that during the absence of her aunt, Rachel should seek an asylum with Mrs. Kirkbye, and a note was immediately forwarded to Kilbank, to signify her intention, and discover how far it might be convenient or agreeable.

No sooner was Lady Anna gone to superintend the regulations of her journey, than Rachel began seriously to consider how she might best extricate herself from the disagreeable situation into which the imprudence of her aunt would very speedily throw her, if indeed it had not al-

ready done so. Not more than a fortnight had yet elapsed, since Julius made his proposals; and though upwards of five months were still wanting to the appointed time of her answer, yet the world had anticipated a decision, which she began to feel each day was further than ever from her wishes.

Never were there two people worse calculated to bias a mind like that of Rachel Kemyss, than Lady Anna, and her more crafty colleague, Mr. Pennington.

These abettors and promoters of the proposed union between herself and Julius would, from the peculiar cast of their own characters, have caused her to pause seriously, even had their project been more strongly seconded by her own feelings than it was on the present occasion. With such supporters to maintain his cause, the suspicions she entertained of the real character of Julius now almost amounted to absolute belief. She could not divest him of his friends, and the disgust

with which the rapacity of Mr. Pennington, and the domineering insolence of her aunt had inspired her, reflected, almost naturally, upon the object for whom it was brought into action.

One thing, moreover, had sunk deep into her heart. Noble and generous in her own sentiments, she thoroughly despised that political rancour (she could trace the motive to no other source) which had impelled young Pennington to break through every tie of gratitude, and pursue with relentless hate his benefactor, his preserver, even into his last retreat. "Had he nobly met him in the battle-field," thought she, "no one would impugn the blow; but to pursue him friendless, without defence, an object not of fear but of pity, is to say the least of it, cowardly and dishonourable. Could they change situations, De Ruse certainly would act otherwise."

Rachel blushed as she detected the preference which she was giving to a stran-

ger in this mental soliloquy. "Yet," thought she again, "Robert Kirkbye knows him, and has proved him, and that is more than I can say of Julius. I know a little indeed, but is that to his advantage?"

Rachel therefore made up her mind (and the ease with which she did it convinced her that she was right), that Julius Pennington had no share in her love. This being the case, neither his father, nor Lady Anna, nor even her uncle, Lord Norland, had any right to force her inclinations; and so long as she satisfied her own mind of the correctness of her motives and actions, the opinion and censures of the world ought to be little regarded.

Indifference too much urged, not unfrequently produces hate. The silken cords of gentle persuasion may often lead the careless heart to love; but goaded on by threats and acts of tyranny, it sickens at the thought. Perhaps it was

so with Rachel. The fine form, the handsome countenance, the brilliant talents of Julius were forgotten. She considered him only in the light of one who was willing to be forced upon her affections, and in as much as she spurned the tyranny of those who would rule her destinies, she rejected the object so peremptorily and clandestinely proposed for her acceptance.

It was at this interval that Julius arrived in person, and took his accustomed seat at the poorly furnished table at Hurstwood. He had been informed of Lady Anna's intended absence (Rachel conjectured how), and came, ostensibly at least, to offer his services in any way that might be agreeable.

But Julius had another point in view. He feared the effect which the precipitancy of this sudden stroke of his father's policy and Lady Anna's folly would have upon Rachel, whose natural pride and delicacy, he had the penetration to

suppose, would be aroused by a proceeding so extraordinary. Her growing indifference the quick eye of jealous love had already discovered, and he determined therefore, by the immediate display of a virtuous and generous candour, to reinstate himself in those affections he was now more than ever anxious to retain.

As soon as Lady Anna had retired, under pretence of further arrangements for her journey, Julius, not at all abashed by the downcast looks, the serious manner, and the averted eyes of Rachel, assuming his most insinuating style of address, drew his chair close to her's, regarded her earnestly for a moment, and then for a short interval maintained a mournful silence.

Rachel, disliking equally the nature of the interview and the improper policy which had contrived it, rising hastily from her seat began to apologize for the

necessity she was under of leaving him; "her aunt might require her assistance."

"Then I shall take your departure, as no doubt it is intended, as a preparation for a more formal renunciation of our past intimacy. Alas! Rachel, I fear it has past away! Those downcast looks, that unusual coldness and indifference, all tell me that I have forfeited those few claims I ever had to your friendship. Only be candid, and assure me that it is so."

Rachel, who had her hand already upon the door, not wishing under present circumstances that any such violent inference should be drawn, desisted from her purpose, hoping that a moment's explanation would again set her at liberty. Julius, afraid that if he permitted an answer to his last speech it might anticipate the subject upon which he was going to enlarge, and seeing that she still lingered, thus continued:

"I should possess but little of delicacy or honourable feeling, if I did not sympathise sincerely with you in the present cause of your too manifest discontent. But you do me injustice, Rachel, in coupling me with proceedings which I beg to assure you I have never sanctioned."

At the mention of a subject on which she had felt so deeply, Rachel burst into tears, and hiding her face with her hands, gave way to the feelings of indignation and sorrow that overwhelmed her. Julius perceiving, or thinking he perceived, that the right chord had been struck, now flattered himself that all difficulties might be easily overcome, and that Rachel might even be wrought upon to approve the measures which she now seemed so decidedly to condemn.

"Permit me, my dear Rachel," said he, advancing towards her, and replacing her on her seat, "to assure you how much my feelings harmonize with your's

on the subject of this intended journey. I can perceive it has disturbed you, and my sole purpose in coming here is to consult with you on the subject. I disclaim all concern with it, and am willing to act in any way you may think proper or consistent with the promise I so lately made you. Only state your wishes, and I will fly to their accomplishment."

Rachel, looking through her tears upon the form that now hung over her in all the seeming anxiety of sympathy and affection, asked in a tremulous voice, "Whether he knew that it was *really* her aunt's intention to consult Lord Norland on the subject to which he had just alluded?"

"Certainly," replied Julius, somewhat surprized, "I saw it in her own hand writing a few moments before I left St. Marions."

"Then it is entirely without my sanction or approval," replied Rachel warmly; "nor can I conceive what possible right

Mr. Pennington has to influence my aunt to a step, which must necessarily involve me in a most difficult and unpleasant situation. Julius," continued she, solemnly and energetically, "as a man of common principle and honour, you are bound to put a stop to this. Orphan as as I am, dependant and almost unprotected, yet no one shall dispose of my destiny to serve their own purposes. My affections are all I possess, and surely a hard-hearted world would never deprive me of these. No! Julius! when I give my hand, it shall be a gift free and unbiassed. My heart shall go along with it—it is indeed all I have to give!"

As the spirit which dictated this appeal subsided, a fresh flood of tears bedewed the fair cheeks of the beautiful Rachel; and as the glossy tresses of her hair loosened from the knot which bound them flowed upon her neck and bosom in wild luxuriance, Julius, in spite of his vexation and disappointment, could not

withhold his admiration. It was but for a moment. The bearing of her speech again took possession of his mind. In the warmth of her expressions he could glean no signs of any return of his love; in the earnestness of her appeal was an unexpected blow to his hopes, and turning suddenly away, he strove to conceal the extent of that mortification and anger that now rankled in his breast. At length he again broke silence.

"Then I am to understand by your late expressions, that in giving your hand to me it would be unaccompanied with your heart; and that, in your disapprobation of the precipitancy of Lady Anna, I am to read your sentiments towards myself?"

"The question, Julius, is unfair. Did you not promise, that for six months the subject should be no more mentioned. Alas! I fear you too are more closely connected with this odious business than you chuse to inform me."

"Odious indeed it is, Rachel, since it calls forth such an epithet," exclaimed Julius, more and more surprized, and grieved at the indignation she expressed towards a measure to which he had hoped to have soon reconciled her mind. "Since you make it so particular a point, I will use my little influence to check the affair. I had indeed thought," continued he, with a melancholy air, "that when you were assured of my perfect willingness to accede to your request, and that the plan, so far from originating with me, was not even approved of by me, I did venture to conceive, that the short interval of a few months would not have been presented as so formidable an obstacle to that declaration in my favour, which, I must confess, you gave me some reason to expect."

At this unlooked-for specimen of presumption, Rachel was not more shocked than she was indignant, and every favourable inference which she might have been

induced to draw from his acknowledged disapprobation of Lady Anna's plan, was completely thrown out of the question by this unmanly exposure of his real sentiments and intentions.

Julius, who had imagined by this bold step that he should add an intimidating weight to his entreaties in the mind of the defenceless orphan, soon perceived his mistake. But it was too late to remedy it. Rachel, in this declaration, saw the necessity of being explicit on her part; and her former prejudices uniting with this new cause of disgust, came most seasonably to the aid of her sinking spirits.

"Since you would anticipate my answer, Mr. Pennington," said she, proudly, "I am not unwilling to inform you of my sentiments. I thank you for your former friendship, and for the further honour you intended me; but I cannot conceive you will be much disappointed if I state to you frankly that I decline the

latter. After such a statement, you cannot, I am sure, suffer my aunt to take so needless a journey; and I trust to your honour to prevent it."

"For heaven's sake, Rachel," exclaimed the still more astonished Julius, "recall those cruel words! You do not, I am sure you cannot, mean what you say. You cannot be serious?"

"I am both serious and firm," answered Rachel. "Had I acted otherwise, you might, after what has passed, have justly accused me of inconsistency."

Here she was about to leave the room, when Julius, who was a young man of an impetuous and overbearing nature, advancing towards her, seized her arm, with a sudden and painful grasp, and looking angrily and contemptuously in her face, said, in a voice deep and tremulous with passion —

"You have wronged and you have insulted me, and you may live to repent

it. Never did I think it would be my lot to woo my own rejection. What have I done to be made the fool of your caprice? Rachel, before we part, I would know your *reasons* for this conduct. I have a right to demand them. Something extraordinary must have occurred to occasion all this. Has no interloper stepped in between me and my hopes? Are you not following some blind track, and making me the victim of your imprudence?"

Rachel trembled as he pronounced these words; and as he looked into her countenance with eyes that would read her very soul, the colour rushed to her cheeks, and she vainly strove, by averting her head, to hide the unaccountable confusion that possessed her.

"Ha!" exclaimed Julius, surprized at what he thought a confirmation of his conjectures — "it is true, then! — You have played me false, and wish, by this manœuvre, to transfer to another what is

justly mine! How little did I know of Rachel Kemyss! But I was too quick-sighted to be altogether deceived. No; artful as you are, do not suppose that certain facts have escaped me. But, farewell. I thank you for your candour; and, trust me, I shall never forget it."

He was about to leave the room, when Rachel, in her turn, astonished, dismayed, doubtful how to act, yet shocked at the inference he had drawn, begged him to stay one moment, and give her an opportunity of explaining away any fallacy into which he had fallen.

"You may explain," was his peevish answer, "but I fear you will not so easily convince. For my own satisfaction, and for the sake of your credit, may I ask you a few questions?"

"O, certainly! as many as you please. I shall most cheerfully and explicitly answer them."

Rachel now flattered herself that, by

this concession, he would be mollified; and, finding all his suspicions unjust, he would no longer impute to her other motives than really actuated her conduct. But she was mistaken; and soon began most heartily to repent the permission she had granted. Julius paused, and stood earnestly regarding her, as if considering within himself how he might best give effect to his examination.

"As you have allowed me to question you," said he, at length, "pray tell me, do you know one De Ruse, a kind of Danish runaway, a traitor, a man whose neck has been too long parted from the halter for which it is destined?"

Rachel was thunderstruck. She had anticipated no such question; and all the consequences of an answer in the affirmative at once unfolded themselves. She knew too well that her interference in his affairs would, under present circumstances, bear the most unpleasant construction; and she dreaded to mention

the reason of her interest in his safety, from the fear of violating her promise to the Kirkbyes, and exposing both them and De Ruse himself to danger. Her confusion increased, and she stood silent.

"My first question unanswered?" exclaimed Julius, with a kind of malicious triumph. "Shall I try a second? Did you not go out purposely to meet him at the bridge of Barle on the morning of the tempest?" Rachel was again silent. If she told the truth, she must implicate the Kirkbyes. Than this any alternative was better.

"No answer to my second question," again exclaimed Julius; "and yet I was to ask as many as I pleased, and had a promise that they should be cheerfully and explicitly answered. One more, and I have done. Have you not met and conversed with De Ruse more than once?"

Rachel, who now found it in vain to attempt an answer, and was so covered

with suprize, confusion, and dismay, that even had she possessed the inclination, she scarcely possessed the power to reply. Her agitation, her astonishment at these charges, her extreme vexation on finding herself so inextricably situated, totally overcame her fortitude and her firmness, and retiring to the window, she gave way to a flood of tears.

Julius was scarcely less astonished or less mortified than Rachel herself in the success of his own charges. The heat of his temper urged him to severe rebuke; but a moment's thought determined him to seek severer vengeance, and merely affecting a haughty laugh, and darting a look of contempt upon his victim, he closed the door with violence, and left her to her meditations.

CHAP. X.

After what had passed, not only dreading, but feeling totally unequal to sustain a conference with her aunt, Rachel, leaving word that she was indisposed, retired to her own room. Here, in the most perfect seclusion, she indulged unrestrained the violent burst of her feelings; and it was not till after she had shed many tears, that she found herself sufficiently composed to review the recent and interesting events in which she had been engaged.

She could not repress her surprize, as she considered what a general ferment, and what a reverse in her own individual situation and sentiments, the arrival of the outcast De Ruse had caused. She could not but allow herself somewhat imprudent in having so heedlessly involved

herself in his concerns, and she contemplated, with many gloomy anticipations, the consequences of her interference.

Conscious of the purity of her own intentions, it was not that she so much dreaded the threats of Julius towards herself; but she shuddered to think, that involved as her name now was with that of De Ruse, he, innocent of the indignation which she had excited, might probably be made its first victim.

She knew the courage, the activity, the perseverance of young Pennington in any thing he chose to undertake; and though in the first instance she had been the means of saving the fugitive from his vengeance, yet she doubted how far these later events might hasten his destruction.

Companionship in misfortune ever creates an interest, and Rachel, without intending it, began imperceptibly to allow a kind of union between her own fortunes and those of the persecuted Dane. Not that her heart was more than ordinarily

engaged in the matter, except that she thought him brave, gallant, and unfortunate, and that her acquaintance with him had been productive of more serious consequences than she could have anticipated. She knew not as yet, or she was unwilling to own to herself, that her admiration of the manners and the character of De Ruse had been perhaps one reason of her valuing Julius less highly, since she found that there were men in the world equal, if not superior, to him. Indeed, in favour of Julius, her prepossessions had never been particularly violent. She admired, without loving him, and though frequently pleased with his society, yet never repined if accident for a time totally withheld it.

"But how am I to conduct myself? What will be the result of what has passed?" were the questions which principally forced themselves upon her attention. After maturely deliberating upon her conduct up to the time of her rejec-

tion of young Pennington, she found nothing in her motives worthy of condemnation; and in this last exertion of her resolution and candour, she saw nothing but the proper use of that controul over her own destiny, to which she, in common with all mankind, was certainly entitled.

In this reflection she found comfort, and determined, whatever might befall her, to persevere in that course of rectitude, and to maintain that independence of action, which she was now thoroughly convinced would, in her peculiar situation, be her only safeguard and protection. Yet did she much distrust her own inexperience, and bitterly lamented that fate, by depriving her of the fostering care of her parents, and entrusting her to one so incapable of the charge as her aunt, had forced upon her a responsibility equally irksome to the softness of her disposition, and the tenderness of her years. How much did she wish to see Mrs. Kirkbye, and pour forth into her

friendly bosom all her grievances. Notwithstanding the unnatural tyranny of Lady Anna to her protegée, and the many foibles and weaknesses by which she rendered herself equally disagreeable and contemptible, never had one word of complaint, one smile of ridicule, one sign of disapprobation, been signified either by the words or gestures of Rachel, during the whole course of her intimacy at Kilbank. While Mrs. Kirkbye almost regretted this want of confidence, which precluded her from offering those consolations which her young friend frequently needed, yet she could not but admire her for her forbearance, and prognosticate that qualities so mild and dignified, ripened as they were in the school of adversity, would at some future period both secure the happiness of the owner, and confer a lustre upon that sphere in which she was destined to move.

Rachel, at length, wearied with her sorrows and her reflections, after com-

mending herself into those hands which alone are able to support the afflicted, retired to rest, resolving in the morning to call at Kilbank, and seek for advice and consolation in the experience and friendship of Mrs. Kirkbye.

But the morning was not destined to pass smoothly over the head of Rachel. Though she rose early to make her little preparations for the proposed visit, which though now perhaps no longer *necessary*, she nevertheless felt unwilling to relinquish, Lady Anna, wrapped in a dressing gown, her hair disordered, and her whole person manifesting the expedition of her movements, hastily entered the room, and without farther salutation, poured forth the full bitterness of her indignation against the fair victim of her caprice and folly.

"How dare you, Rachel Kemyss — without my permission too — contrary to my express command — in disobedience to my wishes, — how dare you presume, ignorant, foolish, dependant as you are,

how dare you act as you have done to young Mr. Penington? Are you infatuated, girl, ridiculous, bold and presuming as you are, infatuated enough to ruin yourself and to incur my everlasting displeasure? But Lord Norland shall know of this. He will know how to tame that proud spirit. He will teach you how such men are to be rejected; and a bitter lesson shall you learn for having dared to have a will of your own, contrary to my strict commands and my superior experience! Who could ever conceive such a thing, as that you would be ridiculous, absurd enough to refuse Julius Pennington! Where are your senses, foolish girl? If you have thrown them away, it is my duty to restore them. Upon this your stubborn spirit may calculate, that neither Mr. Pennington of St. Marions, nor his son, nor myself, nor yet the world, shall be disappointed in one tittle of their expectations by your

childishness and folly. If you are not crazed, Rachel, I dare not say how bad you are."

Long did this violent and unmeaning jargon continue. As usual, Rachel received it in silent submission, but was shocked to find that her aunt was willing, nay even eager, to carry those despotic principles to the extremities of action, which so often formed the subject of her discourse. Nothing calculated to intimidate was omitted in these invectives of her ladyship. Threats and maledictions were her weapons, and she was enabled, from continual practice, to wield them most nobly.

After leaving her decisive commands that Rachel should immediately sit down and enter into an amicable explanation of her past rudeness, and by apologies and concessions sooth the irritated feelings of her lover, Lady Anna left the room, at the same time throwing upon

the table a note, which Rachel justly conjectured contained the information which had raised the present commotion.

She advanced to the table, looked at the direction, and perceived that the hand-writing was that of Julius. Curious to discover how he had worded the account of his fancied wrongs, she opened it, and read as follows:

"It were manifest injustice to your ladyship, particularly after the very flattering interest you have taken in the recent connection existing between the families, not to inform you that it is entirely broken off. The reasons which have induced Miss Rachel Kemyss to adopt so decided a step are so *explicit*, *substantial*, and *satisfactory*, that your ladyship will no doubt remain perfectly satisfied with the propriety of the new arrangement. The sole intent of this communication is to prevent any surprize or misconstruction with regard to the future conduct of the abandoned

party, although, no doubt, the *known* candour of Miss Rachel Kemyss will already have anticipated any such result. J. P."

With a gentle sigh, but without one feeling of self-reproach, did Rachel replace upon the table this ungenerous production. She knew that it was cruelly intended, and the bolt by this very circumstance lost half its force. "What an escape have I had!" was her prevailing sentiment. "Julius Pennington! and so tyrannical, so malicious, and ungenerous! Would De Ruse have done so?"

The theme was dangerous. Why should she institute a comparison? She seized the note, and hurried to the breakfast-room. Lady Anna was not there. No orders had been given to counteract her visit to Kilbank. She made accordingly a hasty meal, and leaving word where she was gone, soon found herself without the gates of the park.

How fresh was the morning breeze as

it gently kissed her throbbing forehead! How reviving the first notes of the spring as they warbled from the neighbouring bush! how tranquillizing the softened murmur of the waters as they gently flowed and rippled against the pebbly banks! In vain do we woo peace of mind in the giddy circles of eternal dissipation. One breath of heaven's pure air, one moment's commerce with the freshening sweets of nature, will do more to smooth the brow of care, recall the mind from gloomy wanderings and distraction, than all the deadening noise of revelry, or the false stimulus of fashionable riot.

Rachel was received at Kilbank with all the flattering attention of sincere regard and friendship. Happy at all times in her society, Mrs. Kirkbye was now more than ever anxious to see her. The reports of the supposed connection between her and young Pennington had now gained such ground in the neigh-

bourhood, that the marriage was spoken of as a certain event. Mrs. Kirkbye, who knew all the parties well, and could dive with tolerable exactness into their separate views, felt scarcely easy in the reflection that so many engines were at work to entrap a young female into a measure which, in spite of its present splendid prospects, might not in the end be productive of either happiness or comfort.

Though she was one of the last people in the world to intermeddle with the affairs of others, yet in whatever concerned the fair orphan, she thought she had a right to feel a more than common interest. By his conduct Lord Norland appeared tacitly to disown his niece, and by her tyranny and caprice Lady Anna entirely excluded herself from the title of a protectress, and ought by every true friend of Rachel's rather to be regarded with suspicion than confidence. If in her education Mrs. Kirkbye had been of such material service to Rachel, if she

had ever regarded her with a parent's affection, and been her sole support amid the gales that might have crushed her tender years, surely it was not only natural, but it was her duty, to look with an eye of interest upon any measure which involved in its consequences the happiness of her whole life.

Thus had Mrs. Kirkbye reasoned with herself; and the result was, that in the event of Rachel's applying to her, she determined to open her mind fully upon the affair, unless she found that her young friend's heart was really engaged in the project.

Mr. Pennington of St. Marions was a character too prominent to have escaped the penetrating eye of Mrs. Kirkbye. She had read him thoroughly. Beneath the cloak of superciliousness and obsequious grimace, he concealed a disposition selfish, ungrateful, and domineering. Though ignorant in the extreme, he was captious, presuming, and authoritative to

his inferiors in station, while nothing could equal his exterior complaisance and servility to those he considered his superiors. Yet even with them his politeness never induced him to barter one atom of his interests; and it was a common remark, that never did a smile and a bow and a civil sentence mean less than with the owner of St. Marions. With all this sharp-sightedness, as far as self was concerned, Mr. Pennington was decidedly a weak man. He was very open to flattery where it did not touch his pocket, and he was easily intimidated by menace where it did. In conversation he always took a prominent part, but whatever he said seemed to come from the surface; what lay below was too sacred to be revealed.

If there is one species of manner more disagreeable than another, it is that which sets itself forth as purely conversational and worldly. Such people glory in the appearance of carrying two faces, one

for the world, the other for themselves. They think it a clever thing to contradict by implication what they utter with their lips, and whatever they say, or in whatever they acquiesce, it is all done with a kind of reserve upon their private opinion. In this silly presumption of superior intelligence, Mr. Pennington was a perfect adept, never considering how much it outraged the open candour of a gentlemanly spirit, and how much it insulted the common sense and penetration of those with whom he conversed. In his opinion, however, this species of manner was a master stroke of policy. It possessed a kind of gloss which secured him from unpleasant queries, and shook off the consequences of imprudent avowals. It was a shield against all impertinencies, yet always implied sufficient to serve his purposes.

By the world Mr. Pennington was esteemed a person of great wealth and importance. The latter, however, was

entirely the result of the former. Very few professed any personal regard for him. The principal part of his fortune consisted in the extensive and noble domain of Hurstwood, which, with its manors and rights, formed one of the finest estates in the county. His paternal property at St. Marions was comparatively small; but circumstances little honourable to him induced him not as yet to transfer his residence.

Harry Hurstwood, a wild and impetuous character, but who was reputed to unite many sterling good qualities with his failings, had been the last possessor of the estate which, bearing his name, had been conveyed to him through a line of ancestry almost coeval with the conquest.

Injudiciously brought up, during a long minority, he had early entered the world, a splendid victim to its vices and intrigues. The headlong propensities of his nature, the profuseness of his generosity, the openness of his heart, and the

extent of his resources, all aided in the conquest which was finally achieved over a mind naturally highly gifted, and not devoid of penetration and common sense. Surrounded by a train of flatterers and dependants, who made their servility the engine of their selfish designs, he commenced, while a mere boy, a course of desperate folly and extravagance, which equally astonished and confounded both his friends and the abettors of his vices. Delighted to find himself at the head of a band of knowing ones, whose obsequiousness and deference gave one so ignorant of their motives an exalted idea of his own powers, he dashed forward regardless of every thing but the intoxication of the present moment.

About this time Mr. Pennington came into possession of his patrimony, somewhat wasted by the extravagance of his father. His spirit, narrow and selfish, galled by this deterioration of his prospects, looked eagerly around for the

means of aggrandisement, and the lavish generosity and heedless dissipation of his neighbour, Hurstwood, afforded a prospect too tempting to be neglected. He made the most servile advances, did not scruple to cringe, and even bear with insult, and at length by dint of perseverance and art contrived to insinuate himself into the confidence of the careless prodigal.

Such was the noble spirit of young Hurstwood, that had his eyes been opened in time to the inevitable ruin such a course as he was pursuing would entail upon his fortune and prospects, he had at once desisted and yielded himself to the direction of more prudent counsels. Such a reformation, however, it was the interest of Mr. Pennington to prevent. He took into his counsels one Braythwaite, a shrewd fellow who had lately settled in the country as a land agent, and together they hoped to reap most solid advantages from the infatuation of their

benefactor. Mr. Pennington possessing the will and the means, his coadjutor Braythwaite suggested the way, and in spite of the ignorance and weakness of the former, his malice, envy, and rapacity, joined to the active spirit and shrewd genius of the latter, produced a very formidable combination against the heedlessness and inexperience of Hurstwood.

Braythwaite obtained the stewardship of the estates; and by every species of mal-practice, ensured to himself a command of money. Mr. Pennington, who by his pretended friendship, and the wary character he possessed in pecuniary matters, had won the confidence of Mr. Hurstwood, was ever sedulous in keeping from him the true state of his affairs; and when the rents of the present year were consumed, and those of the ensuing one anticipated, he glossed the matter over, represented it as a mere temporary inconvenience; and by the assistance of

Braythwaite, had ever those large sums at command which would lull to sleep, in the mind of their inexperienced victim, all idea of his approaching ruin.

The day on which Harry Hurstwood attained his twenty-second year, he was married to a young lady of high rank and great beauty, whom he had met with accidentally in the north of England. To his inexpressible grief she died in giving birth to a son and heir, and for some time afterwards his career of folly seemed to be abated.

The plotting friend and the wily steward saw this with dismay; nor were they easy till they found that the continuance of his very affliction caused him again to have recourse to his former habits of dissipation, in order to fly the vain regrets which oppressed him in his solitude.

The time at length arrived when, the measure of his imprudence being full, the vultures fell upon their prey, and

disclosing to him the pretended total ruin of his affairs, pressed him for the immediate repayment of those vast sums with which they had supplied him, claiming, at the same time, a most exorbitant interest for the accommodation.

All, however, did not, at the commencement, work quite as well as they wished. They calculated upon the known impetuosity of Hurstwood; and never entertained a moment's doubt but that, on the payment of a further sum, and a legal cancelling of all claims, he would consent to Mr. Pennington's taking actual possession of the estate.

When informed of this alternative, the indignation of the young man exceeded all bounds. His eyes were immediately opened to the iniquity of the plan which had been formed against him; but as there now appeared no remedy, he gave way to the violence of his feelings, and striking in his passion the man who had betrayed him, vowed, that sooner than

sign any such deed, which would convey the lands of his ancestors to such a sneaking villain, he would be dragged to the most loathsome dungeon in which malice or revenge could enchain him.

Braythwaite, with all his cunning, and Pennington, with all his foresight, had never anticipated this result. They were both aware, that the debt against the Hurstwood estate, exaggerated as it was in their statements, yet, in the eye of the law, would not reach above half its real value; and they shuddered at the exposure which would await them, should young Hurstwood remain and set their claims at defiance.

The precipitancy of their intended victim himself soon, however, relieved them from their fears. His high and hereditary pride could not bear the idea of facing in his own country the impending ruin. He scorned to be the object of pity to his former associates; and, accordingly, taking with him the prattling

innocent who ought to have been heir to his noble possessions, he suddenly left the kingdom, giving it out as his intention never more to return.

Still, however, Mr. Pennington, who had taken possession of the property, was not without his fears, till a letter from Braythwaite's agent in London conveyed the welcome information that both the father and son were lost in their passage from Spain, whither they had embarked.

Thus were the last of the Hurstwoods driven from their paternal halls; and, as no one now remained to dispute Mr. Pennington's claim, he came into quiet possession, after securing to Braythwaite the future payment of a considerable sum of money as his share of the booty.

Though the real circumstances of the case were not generally known in the country, yet some degree of odium, for a considerable time after the event, attached itself to the part which Mr. Pen-

nington had acted; but when firmly rooted in his new acquisitions, his encreasing importance soon blunted the remembrance of it, except in the minds of some of the neighbouring gentry, who were better informed on the subject, and disliked this sudden elevation of a man in many respects disagreeable to them.

CHAP. XI.

"The web of our life," says the poet, "is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together." And who that has journeyed long in this vale of tears will be disposed to contradict the assertion? Even the wings of the most fortunate are liable sometimes to relax, and bound their soarings to the ordinary level of mankind; and few there are so deplorably circumstanced, as not to have occasional risings from the depths of misery and despondency.

Misfortune, that grim dame, is usually represented as bearing in her quiver more than one arrow; and once become the object of her attack, the shafts are said to fly fast upon the astonished victim. Hitherto had one unclouded ray of prosperity beamed upon the path of Julius Pen-

nington. Borne along in the full tide of success, his heart was swelled with pride — his soul big in hope and presumption. But the period was arrived when he too was to meet with some bitter in his cup — when the galling rejection received from his mistress was to be followed by another stroke, as much calculated to affect his interests as the other had mortified his vanity.

Scarcely had he dispatched the note to Lady Anna, with which we have already presented our readers, ere a hasty summons from his father disturbed the plans and meditations which now occupied his thoughts. The clock had barely struck seven, and he was astonished at so early a message. Without, however, wasting any time in fruitless conjectures, he hurried to his father's study, whither the servant informed him that the breakfast table had been for some time removed.

On entering, he found Mr. Pennington in close conference with Braythwaite,

and a considerable degree of gloom and discontent manifest on the countenances of both.

Julius had seated himself for some time ere either of the gentlemen spoke. Each seemed to have an instinctive dread of opening the business; and they looked alternately at each other, as if doubting what course to pursue. At length Braythwaite, who possessed the greatest nerve, and seemed the least affected of the two, taking up a letter, which had dropped from the almost paralized hands of Mr. Pennington, gave it to Julius, without attempting any preface or explanation. It was from a lawyer of the first eminence in the metropolis, and ran thus: —

"Sir,

"Mr. Hurstwood of Hurstwood requests me, as his legal adviser, to inform you, that he is now in London; and as he has business of some importance to settle with you, relative to the intended

resumption of his estates, he gives you this notice, that you may be speedily prepared with such documents as you may deem requisite to such an arrangement.

"I am, sir,

"Your humble servant,

"TITUS TENURE."

"HENRY PENNINGTON, Esq.

St. Marions."

"And, pray, what is the meaning of all this?" said Julius, after perusing the letter twice over with much attention. "What possible claim can this resurrection Mr. Hurstwood have to a property, which, as far as I have always understood, he made over to my father in lieu of large pecuniary advances, to cover his enormous extravagance?"

"As you have always *understood*, Mr. Julius," said Braythwaite, repeating his words. "There's the rub. Now, the fact is this:—Your father has a large mortgage upon the estate; but as a sale

has never been effected, and his interest has been regulary paid from the rents, Mr. Hurstwood can, at any time, resume possession of the whole, on repayment of the original sums advanced. All the world cannot hinder him; and so I have given you a true statement of the case."

"It is false!" exclaimed Julius, impetuously. "It cannot be as you state. It is impossible; and I will never believe it!"

"Just as you please, sir," said Braythwaite, with a collected smile. "Time will prove who is the most false and most foolish."

"Pardon me," said Julius, who began to find that it was the worst of all times to make himself fresh enemies. "I only meant that — that you *must* be mistaken, Mr. Braythwaite."

"No apology, I beg," replied the other, with a bitter smile. "As for my mistake, as you mildly term it, I refer you

to Mr. Pennington, who can have no objection to answer you on this point."

"Then, father," said Julius, warmly, "I appeal to you; and for heaven's sake let your reply be speedy and explicit. Have I not, from a child, been taught to consider myself as the undoubted heir of Hurstwood? Have you not always told me, that the mansion and half the estate should be made over to me when I felt disposed to settle myself? Have you not fostered all those artificial wants, and satisfied their unbounded cravings, which ought alone to distinguish the inheritor of an immense property; and after this, can the tale be true that levels all my expectations with the dust?"

According to the greediness with which we pursue our game is our disappointment in being deprived of it. Mr. Pennington found too late that he had overreached himself in endeavouring to take advantage of the imprudence of his friend. Weak minds, though they fre-

quently possess cunning enough to proceed in achieving a nefarious object, yet rarely are endowed with courage and firmness to bear up against the consequences of a failure. The narrow mind of Mr. Pennington, while it grasped within its sphere the consequences of his former folly, was totally inadequate to contrive a remedy; he therefore merely answered the heart-rending appeal of his son by that most emphatic of all affirmatives — a silence of agitation and approval.

Astonished beyond measure — aghast as his mind rapidly presented the long train of mortifying circumstances consequent on what he had just heard, Julius, darting an indignant glance upon that parent whose indulgence to him had been one of his greatest errors, started from his chair, and rapidly paced the room.

"Father," said he, at length breaking a silence that seemed almost awful,

"what an old fool you must have been to dishonour your grey hairs with such a business as this! What will the whole country think of us? That we are knaves enough, forsooth, to seize that which we want the wit to preserve. Upon my soul, sir, it is beyond all reasonable belief; it is too absurd to be true, and you must pardon me if I still disbelieve."

"Julius," said Mr. Pennington, who could ill brook reproof from a mouth that was but too apt to give it, "since this is the way in which you receive the news of our misfortune, I need not hesitate to acquaint you with a few more circumstances, which will more and more tend to show you that your old father is a fool, and that his grey hairs are unworthy of the estimation in which they might otherwise have been held. You must know, then, that with the assistance of this good Mr. Braythwaite here, I made Mr. Hurstwood, previous to his leaving the country, on offer of a considerable

sum, and the cancelling of all debts between us, if he would give up the estates into my hands, and resign all claims upon it for ever. He refused, left the kingdom, was, as supposed, lost at sea, and having no relations, I was tempted to seize upon that as my lawful right, which I fear we must soon resign. Foolishly did I think that every thing would go on smoothly, as no one except Mr. Braythwaite was acquainted with the amount of my debt, and he has already received a sum equal to half of the benefit I derived from the possession."

"But why did not you, on Mr. Hurstwood's departure, offer the property to sale?" demanded Julius, impatiently. "Who, ignorant of the circumstances, would have dared to bid against you? In such a case all would have been secure."

"Alas! Julius," replied his father, "you judge us foolishly to suppose that such an expedient suggested by you

could have escaped us. Mr. Kirkbye of Kilbank publicly declared that he had an unlimited order from Lord Norland to purchase, in case the estate should come to a sale. We accordingly, on Mr. Hurstwood's supposed death, seized the property."

"Did the debts then amount to the real value of the lands?"

"About half," said Braythwaite, carelessly answering the question.

"About half! Heavens what a statement! We are secure of that at least?"

"Would that we were!" replied the father. "What with the sum I have paid over to Mr. Braythwaite, the expensive style in which we have lived, the late contested election for the borough of St. Marions, and above all, Julius, the sums lavished by your extravagance, I have nothing left to pay the large arrears due to Mr. Hurstwood, but my paternal property."

"Which will not altogether discharge

one third of the debt," interrupted Braythwaite, drily.

Julius struck his forehead, and paced the room still more rapidly. What was to be done? Ought they to relinquish so fine a property, and pennyless have to brave the malice of the world without a struggle? No! — it should never be!

"Mr. Braythwaite," said Julius, approaching the agent, who was now calmly sipping a cup of coffee, "of course you will return the sum you received as your share of this unlucky adventure, considering that it has terminated so unfortunately. I take it as a matter of course?"

"Indeed sir!" replied the agent, without looking up, "I am not in the habit of doing any thing in a hurry. You must allow me to consider well before I can possibly pretend to act."

"But Mr. Braythwaite," urged Julius, "it is an act of the commonest justice."

"Justice!" retorted the agent, looking first at Mr. Pennington, and then at his

son, "what has justice, my dear sir, to do at all with the matter?"

Julius was silent. He felt indignant at the insinuation; but the justice of it at once startled him, and caused him to check the bitterness of retort which was rising to his lips. With all his presumption and his domineering qualities, he was not destitute of art. He fancied he saw Braythwaite's designs. It was of the utmost consequence, at the present juncture, to secure him as a friend. He therefore dropped the subject of the money, and seating himself at the table, enquired anxiously "What was to be done?"

No answer was returned. Mr. Pennington seemed too much overwhelmed with the suddenness of the misfortune to suggest any thing, and Mr. Braythwaite was manifestly resolved not to commit himself. At length, the former rose, and left the room, announcing it as his intention to return in half an hour, during which time he hoped they might be able

to resolve upon some course of action necessary to be pursued.

No sooner was he gone, than Mr. Braythwaite, replacing his cup upon the table, and drawing his chair nearer the fire, invited Julius to do the same, and on his assenting, thus addressed him :

"Your father is entangled in an awkward affair, Mr. Julius ; and as you are equally concerned, perhaps you would not be sorry to listen to any plan that might serve to extricate you ?"

"Nothing could be more agreeable, Mr. Braythwaite. Pray what have you to suggest ?"

"Suggest ! I did not exactly say that I could *suggest* any thing ; but I I think, if you chose to comply with my conditions, I could do something to serve you."

"Well. And what are your conditions ?"

"You asked me to return the money which I received from Mr. Pennington,

as a compensation for my services. Mr. Julius, I am a father. That money is the portion of my daughter, and never shall it be your's separate from her. I need not remind you of those vows of eternal attachment, and all that heap of romantic nonsense with which, to aid your own perfidious and ungrateful designs, you fascinated the better sense of poor Lucy. You have ruined her happiness, and never will her father consent to interpose between you and perdition, unless you render the only compensation you can, by making her your wife. Nay," continued he, interrupting Julius, who was about to speak, "do not say any thing hasty, for you may repent it. Without my assistance, remember that you are a mere beggar, an outcast whom the world will scarcely pity, since your father's rapacity has been the sole cause of it. Those who have once embarked on the stream of iniquity must push forward, or they are lost You know your

father as well as I do. Once strike upon a sand bank, and he gives up all as hopeless. I have it in my power to avert the threatened storm. There are no documents of past transactions but what are in my possession. Connect yourself with me then by the means which I propose, and all shall yet be well. My fortune, whatever else befalls, will at least be yours, and it is not inconsiderable. I am proud of my daughter, and the time was when you did not despise her. Moreover, what may be a further inducement is, that this plan meets with your father's entire approbation. I know your present feelings. Believe me, however, that they will subside on reflection. My proposal is worth your consideration. I therefore will leave you to yourself now, and shall be at your call at any moment to receive your final answer."

Mr. Braythwaite rose leisurely, and left the room. Julius shocked, abased, indignant, but more than all enraged at

the very reasonableness of the arguments to which he had just listened, retained his seat, without either deigning an answer to his companion, or attempting to arrest his departure.

Strong must be the language which can adequately describe the conflict which raged within the soul of Julius Pennington, and convulsed his whole frame, when solitude gave him up to the unrestrained indulgence of his feelings! Oh pride! thou most venomous reptile, that lurks within the recesses of the human heart, cause of man's first transgression, and more than half his punishment, embitterer of the few sweets which life discloses, tempter to ruin, parent to despair, how complete was thy triumph, how galling thy servitude, over him who seemed born to better things than to risk his happiness amid those concealed rocks with which thou plentifully besettest the ocean of life!

What prospect then, had Julius before

him? To allow even a mental canvass of Mr. Braythwaite's proposition seemed at first preposterous, — derogatory, — not to be endured. Long did his mind scrutinize the situation of his affairs; perchance some hope, some gleam of comfort, could be found to lurk amid the threatened wreck of his fortunes. No! there was none. Nothing presented itself but dreary visions of the future. Ruin, poverty, and disgrace, stalked foremost in the picture; not one ray seemed to enliven the back ground. Dig he could not — to beg he was ashamed. The spirit of Julius was not of that noble cast, which throwing itself upon its own exertions, and claiming the protection of a Supreme Being, could bend to the overwhelming storm, and still hope to rise again. His haughty soul could not brook the idea of being driven from its high estate, and obedient to the dictates of honour, yield up willingly a pre-eminence which was usurped. Yet, in the present case, resistance appeared folly — submis-

sion to circumstances intolerable — self-exertion disgusting and derogatory. All was blank before him. He could bear no longer to dwell on this side of the subject — his thoughts, therefore, were compelled at length, to revert to Mr. Braythwaite and his terms.

A drowning man will catch at any straw. Julius, therefore, finding nothing else that promised buoyancy to his sinking fortunes, began reluctantly to weigh the affair in his own breast.

First then, Braythwaite himself? A decided rascal, so by confession. Yet was Mr. Pennington, was his own father much better? Julius stamped the ground as this truth suggested itself. It was not, however, that his father was a knave, but that he had been too much of a dupe to profit by his knavery. Here lay the misfortune. Next came Lucy Braythwaite. Good tempered and handsome enough, certainly, and not without accomplishments. Would be well portioned,

and had a real affection for him. — Yet, she was *but* Lucy Braythwaite after all! — Hurstwood and Rachel Kemyss! — Oh! how different was *that* prospect! The beautiful heiress of the Earl of Norland; titles, high connections, unrivalled grandeur! From these to stoop to Lucy Braythwaite, to feed on her father's ill-gotten store, to be levelled with his connections, to owe every thing to his plebeian cunning, or perhaps open violation of the rights of another, — this was indeed galling. It was a dreadful, a mortifying alternative, and yet it seemed the only one!

Julius, more and more agitated as these ideas crowded upon his distracted imagination, determined to leave the house, and cool his throbbing temples in the open air. He was about to reach the door, when his eye rested upon a letter which appeared to have dropped from the pocket of some one, perhaps from

Mr. Braythwaite's. He picked it up, and finding it open, read as follows :—

"Dear Sir,

"You will partake of my surprize when I inform you, that Mr. Hurstwood of Hurstwood, concerning whose supposed loss in the Euphemia packet I advised you many years ago, is now in London. I have received secret intelligence that he is taking measures for the resumption of his estates, having acquired a considerable fortune during a long service under the Danish government. He is here as envoy extraordinary from the king of that country; and is known by the title of Count or General De Ruse. His only son, who has been for some time estranged from his father, served under Gordon during the late rebellion, and of course has made himself amenable to the laws. Whether the count will have interest enough at court to obtain his pardon, is, I should suppose,

a matter of much doubt. In the event of his falling a victim to his imprudence, probably the Hurstwood estate may not be much disturbed, or at least it will open the way for an easy accommodation of the matter. I write in great haste, but will be more explicit in my next.

"I am, dear sir,

"Your obliged servant,

"VICENTIO SERVICE."

"MR. SAMUEL BRAYTHWAITE."

A gleam of inward satisfaction enlivened the downcast features of Julius, as he perused this letter. "Many thanks to you, Mr. Braythwaite, and to you Mr. Vicentio Service, for this valuable information. De Ruse and the heir of Hurstwood the same! Heavens, how strange! Well might he turn and gaze upon the very mansion of his fathers — think it most interesting and most beautiful — linger around it like a foolish stag, wooing the very toils that were laid for his destruction. Little did this young Hurst-

wood know whose life he was preserving; and long it shall not be ere he discovers how ruinous that day's work has been! He would rob me of my mistress too! O Rachel! the day of vengeance is approaching. That stubborn heart shall yield — that fair bosom shall own no sway but mine, or Julius Pennington deserves the ruin that already opens with so hideous a gulph before him!"

Such a confusion of distracting emotions, contrary plans, and contending passions took possession of his soul, that Julius immediately left the house, intending immediately to proceed to action, directing his motions by the surprizing information he had so unexpectedly procured. On his return to the house he ordered out his horse; and leaving a note for his father, soon lost sight of St. Marions.

CHAP. XII.

While affairs of such high import engaged the minds of the cabal at St. Marions, the lovely Rachel was passing her time most delightfully to herself amid the peaceful shades of Kilbank. She had unburthened her whole heart to Mrs. Kirkbye, and that kind friend had repaid her confidence with very frank advice and the most consoling sympathy. Much as she applauded the moderation and forbearance which Rachel ever evinced in her conduct towards her aunt, yet she no less approved her determination of regulating her own future destinies with a strict attention to her own feelings; and she unreservedly offered her advice and asistance to the fair orphan, whenever she might feel disposed to claim them.

Lady Anna, meanwhile, was highly indignant at what she was pleased to term the presumption of her niece. Her anger, however, took a turn most fortunate for poor Rachel. Instead of insisting upon her immediate return to Hurstwood, she resolved to display the extent of her awful indignation by an obstinate show of indifference as to her presence and her motions. Her high displeasure, she conceived, would be rendered most galling by neglect; and thus she suffered nearly three weeks to glide by without the slightest communication with the happy circle at Kilbank.

Happy, indeed, it was! The affectionate attentions and fascinating manners of Mrs. Kirkbye, and the good-humoured regard of Robert, were constant sources of unmixed gratification. But this was not all. There was a fourth admitted to the lively circle, who brought, to the fluttering heart of Rachel, an un-

common share of deep and ardent interest. It was her recent acquaintance, De Ruse.

Disrobed of the garb of misery and want, in the enjoyment of every comfort that friendship could afford, the young Dane (for we will still designate him by his former title), if he was interesting before, was absolutely fascinating now.

Though his figure did not possess the imposing height of that of Julius Pennington, yet it was more graceful and active; and if his manner was not so measured and equal, it was more natural, and accorded much better with the varied eloquence of his expressions. No one could look long upon De Ruse, without being struck with the native spirit that darted from his eye — the smile, sometimes pensive, sometimes joyous, that revelled on his lip — and the thought, grave and serious, that at times shaded his sun-burnt brow. With a modesty the most winning, and a delicacy of manner and sentiment the

most refined, he united that ease and self-possession which results only from an intimate acquaintance with the world. Though educated in a foreign court, he spoke the language of his native country with a fluency and elegance which perfectly astonished those who were unacquainted with the circumstances of his birth, and the great care which had been bestowed upon him by a most anxious parent. In fact, both Mrs. Kirkbye and her fair friend soon forgot the foreigner, the outcast, and the rebel, in the noble, the generous, the accomplished De Ruse; and Robert, in the warm encomiums which he was constantly passing upon the ability, the bravery, the manly feeling, and upright disposition of his friend, little knew, or if he knew little cared, for the impressions with which he was charging the already partial heart of his mother's beautiful protegée.

In fact, he once ventured to hint that he thought them made for each other.

"If I had the power, by wishing, of accomplishing the thing nearest my heart, what do you think it would be, Harry?" said he to De Ruse, one day as they paraded the private walk together which skirted the bank of the rivulet.

"Not very difficult to conjecture," replied De Ruse, laughing. "You would wish my fair friend, Isabella Vere, to be transformed into no less than Mrs. Robert Kirkbye!"

"O! that I take as a settled matter," said Robert, laughing in his turn. "No —I should wish to see you fairly settled down in my neighbourhood, say, by way of supposition, at Hurstwood, and united to the prettiest and best girl that this country can boast; and I think she does not live very far off; does she, Harry?"

De Ruse looked in his friend's face for a moment, then casting his eyes upon the ground, sighed deeply, and remained silent.

Never did mornings and evenings pass more delightfully and more rapidly than to the small party assembled at Kilbank. The mind of De Ruse was richly stored with those high and scientific acquisitions, which fitted him for the most important offices, as well as admirably versed in that lighter and more elegant species of knowledge which is comprehended under the belles lettres. Without any knowledge of the science of music he delighted in it, and was in this way richly repaid by Rachel, for the pleasure she constantly derived from his lively and improving conversations. Almost imperceptibly their acquaintance ripened into what they conceived friendship; but had they taken the precaution to analyze their feelings closer, they would have found that sentiments somewhat warmer were gradually introducing themselves.

When we suspect no danger we proceed with confidence. Often are mankind

the victims of their own sense of security. To love a foreigner, a rebel, a man whose family was unknown, whose fate hung upon a thread, seemed to Rachel, with a little of prejudice lurking in her mind, a thing in itself so preposterous, nay, so impossible for a person in her dependent situation to do, that, satisfied with this impression, she never thought it worth her while to examine or arrest the progress of those feelings which, though now dormant through the enjoyment of the present moment, still lay within her heart, and threatened its total capture.

De Ruse, however, proceeded not thus blindly. He loved, and loved passionately. A further acquaintance with the mind and disposition of Rachel had completed the conquest which her loveliness had begun, and nothing prevented him from openly soliciting a return, but the consciousness of the exceeding hazard of his situation, and the improbability of

one so highly gifted and so nobly born as Rachel condescending to listen to the vows of one who had nothing to offer beyond his person and his misfortunes.

Frequently did his conscience suggest to him the necessity, nay, even the duty of immediate flight. By his residence at Kilbank, he was aware of the danger to which not himself only, but even his benefactors were exposed, and often did he reproach himself, that the fascinations of the beautiful orphan, and the eager solicitations of Mrs. Kirkbye, and his friend, were able to detain him in a country where discovery would be certain ruin. But the wisest and the best are alike subject to error and occasional weakness with the more common herd of their fellow-creatures, and, as has frequently occurred in former cases, the sapient resolutions of the night have fled discomfited before the temptations of the morning.

Three weeks glided smoothly by, and yet nothing had occurred to disturb the

happiness of the little social circle at Kilbank, if we except the few passing fears which sometimes smote upon poor Rachel's heart as she noticed the almost ominous silence of her aunt, and the occasional misgivings of De Ruse, as he reflected on the critical nature of his situation; all wore the spell of enchantment, and every thing favoured the delusion. Perhaps the very consciousness of danger contributed to unite those hearts more closely in the union of affection, which were already sufficiently disposed to foster the bonds of amity and mutual good will; for in a very short space the unreserved nature of their intercourse produced that delightful sympathy in each other's feelings and sentiments, and actions, which is the only sure and solid basis either of friendship or of love. De Ruse was in the habit of rising early, and taking exercise within the precincts of the grounds, before any of the family

were abroad, in order that no unnecessary suspicions might be excited.

The sun had not yet risen, and he was sauntering carelessly through a thick and secluded part of one of the shrubberies, when a person rushed forth from the dark shade of an arbutus, and standing in the path, arrested his further progress.

De Ruse was startled, and dreading some treachery, immediately hastened to put himself on the defensive. A nearer inspection of his antagonist, however, changed all his other sensations into a feeling of surprize. In the wild, the pale, yet interesting figure before him, he soon recognized that same poor Godfrey, whose hard lot he had so sincerely commiserated, and whose labours he had so often shared during his residence at the cottage on the coast. His first impulse was that of kindness. He advanced, and offering his hand in token of friend-

ship, waited the event of this extraordinar y visit.

Godfrey took no notice of the proffered familiarity; but first looking cautiously around, stepped up to De Ruse, and said in a low tone, but with much solemnity, —"You must meet me at the bridge to-night. You know it well—it lies in the valley. Do not be later than ten o'clock. If you fail, you may repent it."

The young man, taking advantage of De Ruse's surprize, darted along the path, and was soon lost among the thickets. De Ruse's first impulse was to follow him, and demand an explanation of the strange scene he had just witnessed. The dumb Godfrey speak! What could this portend? It seemed almost as if Providence was interposing with a miracle for some wise purpose. Meet a character so extraordinary at the bridge in the valley!—so late too—and without knowing why, or what consequences might

result ? It bore the appearance, at least, of rashness and imprudence.

Uncertain what to think, or how to act, yet dreading that all was not gliding on so smoothly as he had fondly imagined, De Ruse for some time continued his walk, involved in perplexing thought. There had, however, in his former intercourse with Godfrey, been a portion of frankness mingled with the bluntness of the young man's manner, which inclined him, on reflection, rather to trust in the sincerity of his intentions ; and as he had never even in thought given him the remotest cause of offence, he might reasonably hope that the proposed meeting was rather intended to operate for his good, than serve any treacherous or unfriendly purpose.

When danger is impending, every thing mysterious naturally seems to portend its nearer approach, and De Ruse returned to the house in the full conviction, that during the calm of the last few weeks,

some storm had been brewing against his interests, if not against his life, which was on the point of bursting with fury upon his head. He determined, therefore, to leave Kilbank in the evening, and once more trust his fate in the wide and merciless world, ignorant whether or not he might be allowed to return to the delightful spot which he now inhabited.

The eye of love is ever alive to any change that manifests itself in the object on which it feeds. During breakfast De Ruse even more than usually exerted himself to appear easy and light-hearted, but to the ear of Rachel there was an abruptness in his laugh, a constraint in his manner, and a forced gaiety in his expressions, which convinced her that this pretended gaieté de cœur was only a cloak for much internal disquietude. "Was he meditating a retreat? Had he received any bad tidings? Was he ill? Did he begin to be tired of his present seclusion?" These and a thousand other

conjectures occupied the sympathizing fancy of Rachel, as she sat somewhat abstracted, and taking but little part in what was going on around her.

After breakfast the party adjourned to a long gallery at the further part of the building, which Mr. Kirkbye was fitting up with specimens of the best masters. Several packages had been received the day before from London, and they all promised themselves much pleasure in the inspection and arrangement.

Rachel, however, whose spirits, she knew not why, indisposed her to join for the present in the bustle, retired to one of the windows which commanded a view of the high grounds which backed the mansion of Hurstwood, and gazing for some time upon them, as if watching the alternate dominion of sun and cloud, as they flitted along their heathy sides, she at length lost herself in meditation, and unconscious of the publicity of her situation, suffered one straggling tear to start un-

reproved from between her silken eye-lashes.

She had not remained in this posture long, ere a deep sigh disturbed her reverie, and caused her to start and eagerly dash away the truant and pearly evidence of her thoughts. De Ruse stood near her. His countenance was full of indescribable feeling, but admiration and love seemed paramount. His eyes, however, as they met her's, relaxed the eager gaze with which he had been contemplating her. He directed them to the earth, and remained silent. A look — a motion — O what are words to these! Rachel had been dull not to have read so legible a volume. She did read, and her limbs faultered; her cheeks were dyed with the pure blush of startled modesty, and spite of herself, her bosom betrayed by its heavings the flutterings and agitation of her heart.

She would have gone, — but De Ruse gently touching that arm, whose living

whiteness and exquisite mould would have defied all art to imitate, requested her, in a tone modest, yet energetic, to stay for one moment, perhaps the last he might ever enjoy of her society! There was in the motion a something so gently commanding, and in the voice a degree of pensive seriousness, that Rachel felt she had not the power to deny the request. She looked towards the further end of the gallery and perceived Mrs. Kirkbye and her son actively employed in their task.

"I saw you so fortunately placed for my purpose," said De Ruse, in a low voice, "that I could not resist taking advantage of the opportunity I have sought all morning, of saying adieu to one whom I so much ——"

His voice trembled. Rachel hastened to relieve the threatened embarrassment. "Then you are really going to desert us, Mr. De Ruse?"

"Desert you! Would to heaven Miss

Kemyss, my absence would appear desertion! I could then bear it with more fortitude. Alas! I must to-night leave this place where I have spent so many happy, happy hours, and go whither I know not, and uncertain whether I may return."

De Ruse paused, Rachel's heart beat, and it was vain to disguise the sorrow which, fortunately perhaps, now totally choaked her utterance. Her head sunk upon her bosom as she strove to conceal the extent of her emotion.

"I am sure," continued De Ruse, "I have, under any circumstances, your good wishes; and whether my life should fall a sacrifice to the laws of this country, or fortune befriend me so far as to restore me to my former prospects, I think I may claim the inward satisfaction of possessing your regard and friendship."

"Indeed you may!" replied Rachel, fervently, all other thoughts being absorbed in the fancied danger of the young

soldier. "Whatever may happen, I can only entertain one opinion of your merits; and in common with your other friends here, I shall ever offer up my prayers to heaven for your preservation and happiness."

"My preservation, perhaps," replied De Ruse, "depends somewhat, under heaven, upon my own exertions; — my happiness is in other hands. Your prayers, however, ought, and if they are offered up in the spirit in which I wish, I am sure they will ensure it. I have stayed too long in this place — the eye of the basilisk has been upon me. While friendship woos my stay, duty forbids it, and I have this morning received a warning which I dare not disobey. — When do you return to Hurstwood Miss Kemyss?"

"Alas!" said Rachel, while her eyes filled with tears, "I cannot tell. Circumstances have occurred——"

"I know them well," interrupted De

Ruse, "at least I have been informed by my friend Robert, that I have been the innocent cause of some unpleasantness in a certain quarter. How shall I ever requite your kindness and condescension?—How shall I ever repay you for those tears which your sympathy for an unfortunate outcast like myself have caused you to shed?—What would I not endure to be worthy of the title of your defender!—Indeed I should be the happiest of men if the remotest prospect of serving you opened upon my view;—tell me, if fate should detain me in the country, how I can be of service to you? Even the best and most deserving are sometimes in need of assistance, and I burn to show my gratitude, my esteem, my friendship, my—my devotion."

"I fear," replied Rachel, endeavouring to rally, and force a smile, "that I have no service at present suitable for such a knight; and if I had, where should I be able to find him?—Ah no!" added

she, more solemnly, "you could not, Mr. De Ruse, show me and the rest of your friends better proof of your devotion, than by taking every means to ensure your own safety; and you may rest assured that any assistance we can render you, either jointly or individually, will be a real source of gratification and pride to us all."

"Thank you," replied De Ruse, emphatically. "I have vanity enough to believe you. But remember what I say. The time may come when you would not scorn to apply even to an outcast like myself for aid and protection.—You are acquainted with young Mr. Pennington. I am acquainted with him likewise, as you have witnessed. I know him to be passionate, headstrong, malicious, and ungrateful. You have wounded him in the tenderest point—I would therefore have you contrast your defenceless situation with the remorseless, unfeeling character of a man like

him. I would not alarm you — but something may be expected from feelings so exasperated, so hurried on by mortification and disappointment. I cannot tell what alteration this night may be made in my destination, but if all passes off as I expect — I shall probably lurk in the neighbourhood till I can ensure a safe passage to my own country, or rather I should say, to Denmark."

"Then you are not in reality a native of that kingdom?" said Rachel inquisitively.

"No. I am as true born an Englishman as my friend himself yonder, and for any thing that I know to the contrary as well born. I left these shores in my infancy. — But concerning my plans. Remember, if at any time you require my assistance, you will hear of me from a young man of the name of Godfrey, who with his parents inhabit a lone hovel on the shore, not a great distance from the bridge of Barle."

"I know the place well," replied

Rachel; "but," added she mournfully, "I hope our next meeting will not take place under such melancholy auspices."

"I hope so too," replied De Ruse, "provided it takes place soon. But O, how well could I endure intervening days and nights of wretchedness — was I certain they would be rewarded with such a moment as this! Should we meet no more, accursed in my eyes will those sails be that bear me from these shores, — and bitter in the recollection of future years will be that hour, when, to preserve existence, I left behind me all that could render existence desirable. Wherever fate may drive me — into whatever climes I may rove, or whatever scenes of splendour or of misery I may be doomed to witness — yet the remembrance of the days I have passed among these blessed hills and vallies, will rest vividly upon my imagination, and nothing but that stroke which lays me low, will ever impair the impressions they have made!"

Rachel was deeply affected, for there was an energy which mingled with the pensive tones of De Ruse, which at once reached and pierced her heart. She involuntarily stretched forth her hand, while the word "farewell" faultered on her tongue. He seized it with fervour, and pressing it gently to his lips, they left the window, and joined Robert Kirkbye, who was coming to demand their assistance.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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